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MYSTICISM AS REVOLT

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Foucault, Deleuze and Theology Beyond Representation

Petra Carlsson Redell

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Preface

Civilisation must accept nonsense
as a token of appreciation
from its finest betrayers
as they work to find a way
through common sense

This poem by Karl Larsson has followed me through this work ever since I first read it. I was at a gallery with my daughter Nora; she was only a few months old and asleep. I did not dare to leave her out of sight so the gallery owners had to help me carry her muddy, snowy stroller into the middle of their exquisite little exhibition hall.

I believe that some of the ideas gathered in this book from different thinkers are at once nonsensical, political and poetical in the way that the poem describes. At least to me they are, and to work with these ideas has been fantastic. I feel privileged when I look back on the last few years because I have had the opportunity to spend time with other people's thoughts, both through books and in person, without having to rush.

I have had many teachers and conversation partners and I am thankful to all of you for making my life so much richer during these years. Mattias Martinson and Anders Johansson, your sharp and vivid intellects, your great knowledge and your political pathos have not only made my work easier but, more important, have made it feel worthwhile. Carl-Reinhold Bråkenhielm and all the participants in the seminar of Systematic Theology at Uppsala university, you provided a wonderful space for thought and discussion where no idea was too strange to be taken seriously, thank you for that.

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I had primarily gone to the gallery that day to see the artist Marcel Broodthaers' short film of 1969, *La Pluie*. In it, the artist sits in a garden on a small wobbly chair, holding a sheet of paper. He takes up an old-

fashioned pen and begins to write, but as soon as he starts writing it begins to rain heavily. The ink on the paper flows away, but Broodthaers keeps on writing; he writes and writes until finally he looks at what he has achieved, which is nothing but a wet sheet of paper, then he signs it, seemingly satisfied, and that is the end. After seeing the film I read Larsson's poem. Then I asked the gallery owners to help me carry Nora's stroller back down the stairs. I offered to wipe the mud off their white gallery floor, but they said it was okay.

— Petra Carlsson

1

Introduction

As a minister, I once worked at a confirmation camp where we had a Jewish youth leader. He worked with us simply because he wanted to. Mainly, I believe, because it was a sailing camp and he wanted to spend the summer sailing for free.

One afternoon I talked to the confirmands about the credo. Since I regarded myself a liberal Lutheran minister I preferred to give the confirmands critical perspectives of the Christian inheritance rather than to merely hand the tradition over as if it were a revelation of truth. I encouraged them to question what they read. I asked them to discuss and read the credo critically but also constructively: "In what way might this be meaningful in our lives today and in what way might it not?"

Having done that, I gave them an assignment. "Write your own credos," I said. "Begin "*I believe in . . .*" and then add your own position, right here and now, it does not have to stand for thousands of years like this one has, it's just for now." They sat and wrote silently. When they were done I gathered their personal confessions.

Later in the evening, it was time for evening prayer. Without revealing the different authors I read their credos out loud, one after another. They had written about their faith in democracy, their trust in conversation, in love, in their families, in being caring, in music, in the environment and so on. I ended my reading by saying that "this is what we believe today," and then I am not sure, but I believe I said a prayer, or I might have read the blessing.

It was a beautiful summer evening and after the prayer the confirmands spread all over the island we had sailed to during the day. Me, however, I just felt bad. I felt like I had done something wrong but I didn't know what. A few youth leaders were sitting on the dock and I

went and sat with them next to the Jewish guy. By then I knew that the 18 year old Jewish sailor had an extraordinary analytic talent, so I asked him, "Why do you think my stomach aches after that evening prayer?"

"Well, because you have just done what Christians always do," he answered.

"You are probably right," I said, "but just what is that?"

"Well, you say that you tolerate differences, but in the end you don't. You just asked these kids to express their own faith, and then you took their different beliefs and sucked them all up into a Christian evening prayer. It might seem like a warm embrace to you, but I think it's pretty suffocating. It leaves no room for ideas that truly differ. What if they do not want to be blessed and embraced by your God? What if they *want* to differ?"

I had given many confirmands that same assignment before, but I never did it again. As a minister I had been working hard to make the repetitions of liturgy, text and rituals more inclusive. I had striven to include more, to open up and make room for diversity. That night on the dock was not the first time I had doubted whether my attempts at opening the Christian tradition to difference were successful. I had often had a strong feeling they were not. But that night I might have gotten a bit closer to understanding why.

This book is an examination of some of the oppressive mechanisms of the Christian thought structure. I have endeavoured to examine the mechanisms that cause the kind of misdirected respect for difference just described. Mechanisms that work on individual levels, as in the example above, but that also work on large scale political levels. The analyses that follow are at times abstract and intricate, but they have their outset in a very simple and lived question: How can we handle our religious inheritance so that it allows for, rather than oppresses, diversity and different expressions of life?

In order to understand why my actions as a Christian minister were oppressive even when I tried to be libertarian, I turned to the harshest and sharpest critics of Christian faith I could find. I needed help from thinkers who had broken free from the repressive Christian thought structures that I was so obviously still a part of. I needed thinkers who had nailed down the problem and who had formulated alternatives, so

I turned to the most anti-Christian part of Western thought I knew of; France in the mid 1960s.

In the writings of Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze I found what I was after. I found Christianity critique, but also ways forward. In their view, the problem with Christian thinking was that is was based on a representational thought structure. The alternative, therefore, was to move beyond the idea of representation.

In this book, I explore the theological potential of certains notions of Foucault and Deleuze's thinking. I will call these ideas *post-representational* and I will argue that the post-representational ideas are yet to be discovered by contemporary theology. I will also argue that they are of relevance to contemporary theology fifty years after they were introduced, since the problems dealt with in philosophy then are problems that theology today still struggles to solve.

Christian representation and its critics

The idea of *representation* builds on a simple assumption: there are absent realities that may be represented in the present. Objects and experiences that are not present may be represented by, for instance, words, images, music and art. We may talk about things that are not present and thus, more or less accurately, capture these absent phenomena in the present. We may even talk about matters that never seem to be present in any plain sense, like the evasive notion of a divine reality. This basic and seemingly innocent assumption of a representational logic has been vividly discussed in recent philosophy and theology alike.

In fact, certain streams of twentieth-century philosophy argued that the very idea that an absent reality could be captured in the present exposed a profound impertinence regarding the complexity of reality and real life experience. Life is not that simple, reality is not that plain. No matter how hard we try to find the right words, our language still never fully captures the experiences or the actual things we wish to represent. There is not a plain sense in which the pains and passions of real life may be represented. Whenever we aim to translate an expression of life into words, images, music or dance there is always a great deal of the represented that is left out. Human experience is

multifaceted and always set in complex contexts, which is why attempts to translate an experience in order to share it, or in order to elevate it politically or philosophically, always risk simplification and even complete inaccuracy.

While the problem of making room for the complexity of life over the idea of true representation is a *philosophical* problem, however, it is definitely also a *theological* problem, one discussed throughout the history of Christian theology. In Christian thinking, past and present, there is widespread awareness of the predicaments of representation—from early debates on whether God can, or should, be represented at all, up to present postmodern theological debates.

Allow me to introduce aspects of the discussions of representation in the contemporary borderland between theology and philosophy. The presentation will finally lead us to the notion of "post-representation" and why I think such a position—which is present in aspects of Foucault's and Deleuze's thinking, I will argue—could be of relevance for contemporary theology.

Theology and representation

In a general sense, Christian thinkers are accustomed to thinking that the particular *represents* the universal, just as man *represents* God. They are also used to thinking that specific wishes and desires, struggles and miseries that are represented in the Bible and figure in the grand history of redemption, actually mirror life on earth: that the part explains the whole, and the whole the part. Additionally, since God has become flesh, there is no reason to distrust this overarching pattern, nor God's insight into human bodily experience. In short, Christian thinkers are used to assuming the very basic pattern of representation.

On the other hand, however, if this is how the Christian tradition constitutes representation, it is also how it continually throws light upon the problems of representation. For, if Christianity aims to represent that which is beyond every earthly image, does it not finally disable representation as such? And conversely, if God really is beyond every earthly expression, what about God's relation to the world, and what about God's insight into human suffering?

Yet again, if God actually and truly may be represented in one particular way on earth, does that not necessarily render other representations in other particular times and places untrue? The long tradition of white male representations of God causes postcolonial and feminist theologians to wonder; how is the female particularity represented by the male God generality? Was God ever in labour? Was "he" ever raped? How is women's need for redemption mirrored in the grand history of redemption?

The exclusive understanding of the one Christian truth has brought about counterreactions. Inclusive approaches to theological traditions of thought and language claim that more aspects of life on earth need to be represented and included in the interpretations of the Christian narrative—just as I did by reading the confirmands personal confessions in the evening prayer. These attempts to include more, however, evoke other questions: If every expression of life would be included and embraced by Christianity, how could Christian thought ever truly open up for "the other," for those expressions that actually differ, or want to differ? Does not a striving for inclusivism risk falling into a new kind of universalism that renders an escape from Christianity impossible, just as the Jewish youth leader noted?

After the death of God

German theologian Dorothee Sölle (1929–2003) rejects the notion of a transcendent God detached from human, bodily pains and passions. Her theology takes its outset in, and remains in allegiance to, lived experience and human suffering. She finds the idea of a God in heavenly glory, remote from the earth while the world experiences the Holocaust, unbearable. Instead, Sölle puts forward the notion of a powerless and immanent God who shares human suffering. To Sölle, representation is not a problem but a possibility. In fact, a certain understanding of representation provides Sölle with a theological opening.

In *Christ the Representative: An Essay in Theology after the Death of God* (1967), Sölle distinguishes between *representation* and *substitution*. The Christian notion of *substitution*—the idea that Jesus replaces God in the world until the living Jesus is replaced with Christ in the

resurrection—risks detaching God from the world, Sölle contends. The notion of eternal substitution separates God from the world of pain. In Sölle's regard, Christ's resurrection enables the idea of an almighty God who suffers once, then overcomes death and thereafter merely views earthly struggle from a distance.[1]

The notion of *representation,* on the other hand, opens to a temporary rather than an eternal replacement. Sölle's "representative Christ," then, plays the role of God in a world where God is dead. The representative Christ is neither eternal nor powerful, but is present in the world as a temporal representation of God. It is a temporal yet continuous account of incarnation: "By continuing to suffer, he [Christ] maintains his kingdom which has not yet appeared, he remains a powerless advocate on man's behalf, the actor who plays the role of God."[2] Christ the representative stays in the "not-yet"; the agony and powerlessness of the cross. Sölle argues that with representation rather than immediate presence there is "no longer any room for lordship, or power, or any of the other kingly attributes to God."[3] The representative possesses no final power.

Sölle is often mentioned in relation to the death of God theologians or radical theologians in contemporary theology who, in turn, are generally described as opposed to the later Radical Orthodoxy movement. Clayton Crockett describes this divide within the theological field in the beginning of the twenty-first century. He distinguishes the American radical theology or "Death of God" movement from the British Radical Orthodox movement. The former—theologians like Thomas J. J. Altizer, Charles E. Winquist, Mark C. Taylor, Robert P. Scharlemann, Carl A. Raschke and Clayton Crockett himself—are those who embrace the secular and want to introduce a theological thinking that moves beyond the notions of a transcendent God and fixed truths.

The latter, the Radical Orthodox movement—including John Milbank, Catherine Pickstock, Phillip Blond, Graham Ward and others—seek to "purify theology" of any such "philosophical corruption."[4] "Radical Orthodoxy," Crockett writes, "appeals to a desire to use postmodern critique but not get lost in its nihilistic conclusions." The Radical Orthodox, then, share the radical theologians' philosophical

and theoretical starting point, but they do not share their conclusions. On the contrary, the Radical Orthodox theologians aim to restore a Christian foundation and a transcendent God from a theoretical yet deeply Christian outset.[5] Gavin Hyman draws a similar yet slightly different map of the contemporary theological landscape. Hyman notes that there are two different manners in which theology has reacted to postmodern philosophy. One reaction is to embrace the postmodern break with foundationalism and thus leave God, the foundation of foundations, behind. Hyman cites the theologian of immanence Don Cupitt to exemplify this faction. The other reaction, according to Hyman, is one in which the postmodern condition is said to make possible the return of theology as a metanarrative that positions all other narratives and discourses, a position he exemplifies with the Radical Orthodox thinker John Milbank.[6]

While Sölle often is associated with the radical theologians, Frederik Christian Bauerschmidt is loosely connected with Radical Orthodoxy. Contrary to Sölle, Bauerschmidt strives *towards* immediacy, towards immediate presence, and does so by explicitly moving beyond the postmodern critique of representation, and also beyond suspicion.

Christianity carries in itself a critique of representation, Bauerschmidt states: a suspicion of representation that stems from Israel's restrictions against idolatry. With this suspicion of representation, Bauerschmidt holds, "Christianity antedates modernity in its destruction of belief and the discovery of the 'lack of reality' of all representations." In other words, Christianity is a predecessor of the modern insight that human representations of the world do not necessarily capture reality. Christian thought forestalls the modern idea that the words and images we use to represent reality are not exhaustive, which is why we must be suspicious of our representations in order to gain further knowledge of reality.

According to Bauerschmidt, however, just as postmodernity moves beyond the more basic suspicion of representation that appears in modern thought—by questioning whether there is a reality to represent at all—so Christianity at once precedes and moves beyond even postmodern suspicion. The postmodern critique of modern representation is, in Bauerschmidt's view, characterized by a Nietzschean irony—it is

characterized by "pastiche and bricolage." The postmodern critique parodies and plays with the modern belief that there is an accessible reality behind representation. The Christian move beyond postmodern critique of representation, on the other hand, is without irony.[7]

In Bauerschmidt's regard, the event of the cross offers a path beyond suspicion. It is not a distanced and ironic approach to the world, as from a distant point of view, but a path to an actual presence: "in the cross we are presented with a God who is present even in godlessness, and in the resurrection we are promised that godlessness shall not have the last word."[8] God is present, even in the death of God. This immediate presence, Bauerschmidt contends, provides us with a ground to critique both representations of the divine *and* a ground to critique postmodern irony. The Christian ground for critique, moreover, the immediate presence, enables us to spot what Bauerschmidt calls the "icons," God's presence: "God's actual self-presentation in revelation."[9]

In both Sölle and Bauerschmidt, the presence of God is vital. Still, in Sölle the possibility to question, to mourn, and to keep a suspicious approach to this world of oppression and suffering is crucial and is made possible by the fact that Christ on the cross is a present yet temporal representative. Bauerschmidt's path beyond suspicion, on the other hand, leads humanity away from suffering and towards a divine, loving presence beyond representation.

In these examples, God either moves within representation (God may be represented in his or her absence and thus questioned as in Sölle) or moves beyond representation (into presence as in Bauerschmidt). Even the God who moves beyond representation, however—beyond the very possibility of referring to *this* to *that,* beyond the possibility of explaining *what* is present since presence is all there is—is nevertheless clearly identified as the Christian God in the way that this God is *represented* in the narrative of Jesus' death and resurrection. In consequence, the fundamental challenges of thought *beyond* representation are not explicitly addressed. The questions of origin, meaning and end—in a world where God, as the very foundation of representation, is either dead or absorbed into the present—are not fully examined.

More exhaustive discussions of these challenges for the very logic of representation are performed by contemporary theologians in dialogue

with the French philosopher Jacques Derrida. Being a frequent source for rethinking representation in contemporary theology, Derrida is often labelled "poststructuralist" together with Deleuze and Foucault.[10] Derrida's account of representation is discussed by radical theologians and Radical Orthodox theologians alike, though with different outcome. In both realms, the Derridean body of thought appears to deepen the account and discussion of Christian representation—in the latter even to the extent that Derrida is finally critiqued from the Radical Orthodox standpoint.

Derridean representation in theology

In *Erring: A Postmodern A/Theology*—a groundbreaking publication when it first appeared in the mid-1980s—the American radical theologian Mark C. Taylor puts forward a Derrida inspired account of theology, or rather "a/theology"—because, in Taylor's account, the theological object never finally *is*. In Taylor's view, theology is characterized by its present yet absent object and by the impossibility of representation. Taylor, then, introduces to theology the idea of an at once infinite yet constantly broken representation: "Always hurrying to grasp the fleeting here and now, representation can only re-present a presence/absence that never is."[11] Representation unavoidably and constantly opens the gap it aims to close.[12] For Taylor, this finally leads him beyond theology into an a/theology, later developed in his noteworthy titles such as *Nots* (1993) and *After God* (2007).

Radical Orthodox theologian Graham Ward puts forward a theological account of representation that is in many ways strikingly similar to Taylor's, from which he, however, draws completely different conclusions.[13] The broken Derridean representation leads Ward towards Christian faith and, a few years later, to an explicit critique of Derrida. In *Barth, Derrida and the Language of Theology,* Ward introduces representation understood as an uncertain in-between. Ward explicitly preserves the notion of representation, but understands it as a constant deferral of meaning. He introduces an indeterminate representation as an in-between of meaning in which to dwell as a Christian. To Ward, representation is substitution, precisely *because* it emphasizes the

absence of the real object.[14] Contrary to Sölle, then, Ward understands representation *as* subsitution. Moreover, the account of representation as substitution is what enables him to make room for the experience of a simultaneous divine presence and absence, which Sölle, in a sense, introduces through her notion of Christ the representative. In Ward, the question of an original represented remains unsolved, unanswered and illogical in a way that resembles both Taylor and Sölle: "Faith describes what cannot be described, represents a representation that cannot be represented."[15]

However, while Taylor and Sölle relate themselves to the theological death of God movement, Ward finally critiques the Derridean godlessness and endless suspicion. Ward claims that the incessant questioning without final object or goal in Derrida ends up losing its relational potential to a confined and self-centered narcissism: "Does the structure of Derrida's questioning imitate and implement not the structure of exchange but onanism (. . .)? Is it the pleasure of the questioning, of keeping in question, that really counts—the pleasure of not having what one desires: such as keeping the reader in suspense by endlessly deferring the announcement?"[16] In consequence, rather than infinitely dwell in an open and endless presence/absence, Ward places this presence/absence within the Christian narrative. Christian faith is situated in-between the memory of a presence and a hope of an eschatological promise, he says, and to dwell in this very in-between is the Christian calling.

North American philosopher and theologian John D. Caputo performs a theological reading of Derrida that does not follow Ward's radical orthodox move back into the Christian narrative, but that strives to stay in the "a/theological." Caputo is one of two theologians invited to contribute an essay to *The Cambridge Companion to Atheism;* there Caputo refers to Derrida and says that "we must keep a watchful eye for "theological prejudices" not only in theology, where they are overt, but in "metaphysics in its entirety, even when it professes to be atheist."[17] He concludes: "Theology reaches further than the divinity schools; it has to do with a fixed centre."[18]

In other words, Caputo indicates that "theology" lurks in every thought tradition that revolves around a notion of a fixed truth, in any thought resting on an unshakable foundation for thought. Wherever

there is an idea of a fixed truth—the One that excludes the Other—there is theology. In consequence, traditional atheism, with its firm belief in God's nonexistence, is as "theological" as traditional theism. The task for thinkers like Caputo who want to move beyond the Christian dualism that eventuates out of the "fixed centre" is, then, to leave this kind of theology behind.[19] Thus, rather than critique Derrida from a theological standpoint, as does Ward, Caputo makes the Derridean vocation to watch out for metaphysics into an a/theological vocation beyond theology.

According to theologically schooled philosopher Daniel W. Smith, however, Derrida's philosophy will never, and especially not his later work, offer a path beyond Christian orthodoxy into any "a/theology," since Derrida himself stands in the analogical thought tradition and thus, in Smith's view, also in the tradition of Christian orthodoxy. Derrida, in other words, rethinks representation but he never actually enters into a post-representational account.

Post-representation and theology

In Smith's view, the fact that both Caputo and Taylor have been accused of preserving the theological foundation they claim to leave behind is quite natural since Derrida follows the analogical path in Christian thought.[20] Whether used in a radical theological attempt to move beyond theology or in a Radical Orthodox attempt to restore a theological foundation, Derrida, in Smith's regard, remains part of the Christian orthodox tradition. This while Deleuze, with whom Smith compares Derrida, "has followed a very different path."[21]

Smith argues that Derrida follows the *transcendent* and *orthodox* tradition of Christian thinking that leads from the analogy of Thomas Aquinas and the negative theology of Meister Eckhart unto Edmund Husserl, Immanuel Kant and thinkers like Derrida and Emmanuel Levinas. Deleuze and Foucault, on the contrary, follow the *immanent* and *unorthodox* trajectory that reaches back to the univocity of Duns Scotus, unto Baruch Spinoza and thence unto Friedrich Nietzsche.[22]

Whether Smith is right or not in his sweeping distinction, I do find that a difference between these thinkers is captured by the difference

between a "deferred representation," as in Ward and Taylor above, and the aspects of post-representation in Deleuze and Foucault that I aim to introduce in this book.

In a Deleuze and Foucault inspired post-representation, there can be no "deferred representation" since such a notion still implies an evasive absent reality to represent. It implies a distant cause in a chain of being. The fact that the broken representation in Taylor is directed towards a fleeting other, "hurrying to grasp the fleeting here and now," entails a representational separation that Deleuzian immanence, as we shall see, does not assume. Representation in Taylor's regard can merely "re-present a presence/absence that never is."[23] Still, in Smith's view, the very idea that there is an evasive reality even to try, yet fail, to grasp through representation is Christian and even orthodox in its very presupposition. The very idea of a representation that aims to represent the here and now yet constantly fails to do so, entails separation, negation and distance.

Through Deleuze, on the other hand, being is introduced as univocal. There is no analogical relation and separation between words and things, man and God, earth and heaven; there is no "chain of being." The very idea of Christian representation collapses, which is why, Smith contends, Derrida and Deleuze are placed definitively on either side of "orthodoxy."[24] In Deleuze, being is becoming, it is present and nonhierarchical—a multiplicity of expressions, of Gods, things, animals and concepts, in Smith's words: "a kind of anarchy of beings within being."[25] Or, as Smith quotes Deleuze: "The rock, the lily, the beast, the human equally sing the glory of God in a kind of crowned anarchy."[26]

Philip Goodchild does not describe the difference between Derrida and Deleuze in terms of orthodoxy. Still, like Smith, Goodchild emphasizes the aspect of creativity and production beyond the separation between language and bodies, words and things, as well as between thinking and doing in Deleuze. According to Goodchild, Deleuze is more focused on the relation between bodies and language, and the meaning that is produced in the space between the two, than in the deconstruction of meaning and signification—where meaning and signification is different and deferred—as internal to language and thought.[27]

Despite the theological interest in philosophical accounts of representation, Deleuze and Foucault's critique of representation is only seldom explicitly discussed in contemporary theology. From Smith's point of view, the reason for this could be that the Derridean body of thought is closer at hand and less at odds with theology than that of Deleuze and Foucault. Goodchild points out another even more concrete explanation behind the lack of theological interest in Deleuzian thought: Deleuze's thought deals explicitly and creatively with the relation between bodies and language, which is why his thinking is (and has been for quite some time) well-known to students of art and film, while students of theology have been slower to approach this acquaintance simply because it has been considered far from the incorporeal objects of theology.

The particular aspect of the critique of representation in Deleuzian thought is of course mentioned by theologians writing on Deleuze, like Philip Goodchild and Kristien Justaert, and it is even explicitly used as a theological starting point in two essays, by Oliver Davies and Catherine Dale, in the notable volume *Deleuze and Religion,* edited by Mary Bryden.[28]

Catherine Dale writes on Deleuze and his inspiration by French playwright Antonin Artaud when it comes to *breaking free of judgement*. The very notion of judgement, the article shows, is dependent on a representational thought structure with a higher "divine" representation. Without such a logic of representation, there is no correlate on the basis of which to judge. To Artaud and Deleuze, however, this judgement of God hinders creative thinking, hence this very logic must be transgressed. "For Artaud to think, he must have done with the judgment of God, for it is God's judgment that traps the body in the mental circularity of infinity and its representation," Dale states.[29]

Opposing the Christian circularity in representation, Artaud then introduces a notion of the theatre as presence and presentation. Artaud's theatre is "a metaphysics of speech, gesture and expression," where metaphysics is not absent or *re*presented, but *present* in every expression on stage.[30] Significantly, Artaud rejects the help of a priest to broadcast his radio play simply because the Catholic Mass is the

opposite of his theatrical vision. In the Mass, he says, the body is only celebrated once it is *consecrated* and *elevated* to the flesh of God.[31] On Artaud's stage, on the other hand, the bodily expressions, as well as the expressions of light and properties are themselves metaphysical. [32]

There are examples of more elaborate attempts at introducing Deleuzian theology, like Charles E. Winquist's and Catherine Keller's.[33] Still despite these exceptions, I believe most would agree that Deleuze is a fairly rare name in theology while Foucault, by comparison, is more commonly used as a theological resource. Foucault's theories on power and discursive regulations are frequently used in the theological realm and theological discourse on Foucault is by now an established field.[34] I find that while Foucault's perspectives and tools are often applied, however, the theological consequences of his philosophy as such and especially his move beyond representation are rarely addressed.[35] The critique of representation, as well as the move beyond representation in Foucault, is discussed by Claire Colebrook (an Australian philosopher and literary theorist with a background in theology). Colebrook has written on the critique of representation in Deleuze and Foucault in discussions on literature, irony, and ethics, but never actually in relation to theology.[36] Scholar of Comparative literature Arthur Bradley indirectly discusses this aspect of Foucault when he examines Foucault's "thought from the outside" in relation to negative theology.[37] Still, however, neither Deleuze's nor Foucault's critique of representation has been fully explored within contemporary theology.

In the 1960s when Deleuze and Foucault in different ways expressed their critique of representation—as elaborations of the Nietzschean death of God and not seldom as an explicit critique of Christian thinking—the theological domain in general was not open to their perspectives. In fact, to speak theologically of the death of God, or even to critique the notion of a transcendent God from a theological standpoint, was highly provocative—verging on offensive—to the larger theological community. Today, on the other hand, the "death of God" is a common point of departure for theologians of different theological traditions with philosophical interests. If a theologian proclaims the death of God today, this is no longer regarded as grounds for declarations of heresy but, on the contrary, is generally taken as an

opening for a genuinely mystical and political path in contemporary Christian thought.

While times have changed and the possibility to invite what I here label as the post-representational aspects of Deleuze and Foucault's thought into theology has opened up, there are only a few examples in contemporary theology where this opportunity has been examined. Thus, I believe it is time to explore these nontheological perspectives more fully within theology. Possibly, they could actually serve self-critical theology in a time when God-talk returns even in political theory, and when the theological debate seems divided between a radical trajectory and an orthodox trajectory.

Exclusivism versus inclusivism

Lately, political philosophers have shown a growing interest in Christianity. Until recently, a political reading of the New Testament letters of St. Paul probably would not have been received with open arms by most secular philosophers. In contemporary political philosophy, however, a number of thinkers from what was earlier considered radically atheist realms of thought now revel in analyses of the Christian inheritance. Thinkers like Terry Eagleton, Slavoj Žižek, Alan Badiou, Giorgio Agamben, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri have all turned to Christian sources.[38] The growing philosophical interest in the Christian inheritence is, however, not only invigorating from a theological perspective, but also demonstrates the need for theological competence and a continually new thinking of Christian self-critique.

For instance, American historian and religious studies scholar Paula Fredriksen treats the interpretive freedom in philosophical writings on Paul. At times, she claims, these interpretations come close to plain and (what is worse) *unacknowledged* anachronism, which leads to inaccurate suggestions of implications for contemporary life. In her view, the fact that contemporary readings of Paul at times pay no attention to the vast historical divide between the text written and the present reading, leads to misleading anachronistic assumptions of what the ancient texts has to say to our time.[39]

A notable article by Swedish theologian Jayne Svenungsson begins by noting how Badiou and Žižek unintentionally play along with the old Christian notion of a simple division of (an exclusive) Law versus (an inclusive) Grace, a division according to which the former is generally bad and the latter generally good, the former generally Jewish and the latter generally Christian.[40] Thus, despite their awareness of the risks of anti-Judaism, and despite the fact that they explicitly discuss them, Žižek and Badiou are both critiqued for expressing anti-Jewish notions. In order not to end up praising Christianity and mocking Judaism, Žižek presents the Grace versus Law dichotomy as internal to Judaism. This, however, is just another way of preserving the dichotomy as such, Svenungsson states, and to indicate that Jews who lean towards a universal Grace rather than an exclusive Law (that is, towards Christianity rather than Judaism) are the ones leaning in the right direction.[41]

In *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism,* Alain Badiou, similarly distinguishes the particular (and exclusive) understanding of Christ's death and resurrection from the singular (and universal) account. Badiou claims that the Christ event (in St. Paul) opens to a *universal singularity* rather than an *exclusive particularity.* By this he means that the Christ event, in being a singular event in time, offers no generalizable theoretical framework. For this reason it could not be employed by the Roman empire at the time, nor can it be used to support, say, an overarching capitalist notion today. Neither, however, can it legitimize particular convictions or groups of interest today, nor the kind of particularity that St. Paul aimed to free the Christ event from, that is, the Judaic law, since it aims to repeal the Law as constitutive. Instead, Badiou claims, the Christ event instigates a universal singularity through the one event in time that can never be narrowed down to particular law, nor extended into a general law or systematic theory.[42]

Once again, and despite Badiou's intent, we note how the dichotomy of Judaic Law versus Christian Grace—here as the exclusive particularity versus the universal singularity—is reproduced. Through Badiou, Christian universalism appears both *inclusive* and revolutionary, while the Judaic law appears an *exclusive* repetition of the eternal Law. The

repetition of the particular appears as the One that excludes the Other, and as such, open to neither diversity nor change.[43]

The inclusivist versus exclusivist dichotomy is not only present in simplifying accounts of Judaism and Christianity, however, but is also frequently discussed in contemporary theology. As we shall see in chapters 5 and 7, there are trajectories in contemporary theology that enhance the more traditional and exclusive account of Christian faith and worship, versus those who call for more inclusive liturgical language, wider accounts of the Christian narrative and the God notion in order to include more expressions of life. Through a post-representational account, however, the road to diversity need not necessarily go through further dichotomization.

I shall soon leave Žižek and Badiou, but it is interesting to note that the critique of representation, as it is understood and discussed in the present book, actually indirectly addresses the kind of simplifying Christian dichotomy that is reproduced in the former's writings on Paul. Seeing through a post-representational point of view (as described through aspects of Deleuze and Foucault in the next chapter), the idea that a universal inclusivism (as in the notion of a universal Christian grace) would be open to diversity, while a repetition of the Law would not, is vastly simplifying and even erroneous. Furthermore, the dichotomy as such is not in any way final. The critique of representation indicates that an inclusivist Christian approach—as an aim to embrace differences, women ministers, gay love, and so on—at times risks disregarding the oppressive power of Christian universalism. This is the case when the universal Christian "grace" leaves no door open for those expressions of life that actually are different, or want to differ.

An exclusive repetition, on the other hand, is not necessarily more rigid along these lines of thought. In certain accounts, the repetition of the One true law may of course be understood or used to exclude the Other, as has been done through history. But does a formal repetition necessarily indicate the same, the identical and the one? Or, could the repetition of words, of an ethical correlate or a liturgy, also make room for difference by indicating multiplicity in the present as well as through the course of time?

Commentary versus critique

If the relationship between inclusivism and exclusivism is challenged by a post-representational way of thinking, so is the distinction between a confessional approach versus a profane and critical approach.

As mentioned above, there are two movements in contemporary theology that are often introduced as opposite to each other: the radical theology movement and the Radical Orthodox theology movement. The former movement generally adopts a critical approach towards the truth claims of the theological heritage. The thinkers to whom this descriptor is assigned share a far reaching critique of Christianity and its truth claims. Still, naturally, since they keep doing theology, they do not wish to throw this inheritance overboard completely. The Radical Orthodox theologians, on the other hand, aim to restore the Christian truth—not in any simple or uncritical sense, but still in a way that bases Christian theology in faith and confession. From a theoretical outset, and often with a deep acquaintance with contemporary critical theory, the Radical Orthodox theologians reintroduce Christian truth into contemporary theory.

Now, in *The Order of Things* Foucault argues that there are two trajectories for thought that reach back to the early modern period and that ever since then have been in opposition: the *commentary* tradition and the tradition of *criticism*. The commentary tradition, he says, stems from biblical exegesis, while the tradition of critique emerges with the desacralization of language, which makes it possible to question and critique inherited texts and truth claims. The commentary does not aim to judge or criticize the text commented on, but rather to lay bare its inherent truth and wisdom. The critic, on the other hand, approaches a text whose relevance is not yet decided upon, intent to scrutinize and judge it as regards its truth or falsehood, its quality and so forth.

While Foucault introduces this binary couple—the commentary and the critique—he does not settle with these options as final. Instead, he suggests ways to move beyond the choice between commentary and criticism—between, if you will, "God" (the divine meaning internal to a text) and "Man" (the critical subject)—because he finds that both these traditions rest upon a representational logic. In other words, both these

traditions assume a certain relation between a text and reality; that is, either that the text carries an inherent "sacred" truth, an inner reality, or that it may be judged in relation to an outer reality. In consequence, neither of these positions pay attention to the force, the gaps, the fissures or even the materiality of the text and the words as such. They are both focussed on what (inner or outer) reality the words *represent* and thus they miss out on the realities they *present,* the realities that the words and texts *create*.

Consequentially, Foucault discusses different ways in which he finds that language can be understood and texts read *beyond* this representational logic. He is deeply inspired by his contemporary writers, finding, for instance, a path of *transgression* in Georges Bataille, a *murmur* in Maurice Blanchot and finding both of these united, he says, in an account of language as *simulacrum* and *phantasm* in Pierre Klossowski (and later in Deleuze, who is likewise inspired by Klossowski).[44] We shall get better acquainted with these different alternatives to the representational logic as we go along. What is interesting at this point is the way in which Foucault's notions of the commentary and critique relates to contemporary theological discourse.

In my view, to simplify, it could be said that the Radical Orthodox theologians stand in a commentary tradition while the radical theologians stand in a critical tradition. The former wish to elevate the truths inherent to the Christian inheritance while the latter aim to base theology on a deeply critical approach to Christian truth claims as such. For that reason, I find it interesting to read one radical theologian, Thomas J. J. Altizer, and one Radical Orthodox theologian, Graham Ward, in relation to the post-representational aspects of Foucault and Deleuze. Possibly, these readings could indicate directions for contemporary theology beyond at least any simple distinction between commentary and critique. This, in turn, could perhaps even indicate a modus operandi for theology as it searches out pathways beyond the division between radical and orthodox theology.

In the present book I therefore aspire to explore aspects of Foucault's and Deleuze's thinking that I find express a *critique of representation,* as well as notions of *post-representation,* as a resource for contemporary

theology. In other words, I want to search out what new perspectives, forces and notions are brought to light when these aspects of Foucault's and Deleuze's thought are allowed to work within theology.

More specifically, I also hope to find out in what sense a *post-representational* endeavour may provide new approaches to the two dilemmas just described: first, the representational problem of inclusion versus exclusion, of an all-embracing account of Christianity on the one hand, versus an account of an exclusive Christian repetition, on the other; and second, the choice between a commentary approach and a critical approach to theological texts.

Representation and post-representation

Representation and *post-representation* are key notions in this book. The aspects of Foucault's and Deleuze's thinking that express a critique of representation, and which I name post-representational, have inspired several different thinkers and expressions from various domains of contemporary thought and creative practice.

North American feminist Karen Barad, for instance, is inspired by the critique of representation in Foucault. Barad suggests a move away from *representationalism* towards *performativity* because, according to her, a representational account of the world "assumes that there are two distinct and independent kinds of entities—representations and entities to be represented."[45] Representationalism, she argues, builds on a dual account of the world that separates things from words, nonhuman beings from human beings, nature from culture. This dualist thinking, in turn, upholds the distinction according to which women have been connected to nature and subordinated to men/culture.[46] Accordingly, she suggests a move from representationalism to performativity, which in the terminology of this book would be described as a move from a representational to a post-representational approach.

The critique of representation in Deleuze is crucial to the work of American philosopher and feminist Dorothea Olkowski. Olkowski opens her *Gilles Deleuze and the Ruin of Representation* (1998) by making excuses for the fact that she presents old news. Because, she says, to introduce "a philosophy that is conceptually and practically

interested in how representation has contributed to the subordination of women to men," is "hardly startling."[47]

Architectural theory is in one sense far from the field of theology, while, on the other hand, architectural expressions have always been vital to Christianity. The history of church buildings is as telling of the history of Christian thought as are theological writings. In contemporary architectural theory, Manuel DeLanda (philosopher, writer and artist with a focus on architectural theory) introduces a "neomaterialism" or "new materialism" inspired by the critique of representation in Deleuze. His neomaterialism (which is widely known through lectures on YouTube) offers a new theoretical paradigm for the study of architecture according to which processes of the world are, in short, placed outside the self in the processes of matter.

The history of architecture has historically been viewed as a procession of intelligent artistic minds who create the urban milieu through the force of their intentions. A neomaterialist account, on the other hand, understands the history of architecture from the perspective of material processes. Matter lives, functions, and affects us. It affects not only our bodies but also our thinking and creativity (those two godlike abilities we often like to think of as more sublime than the concrete below our feet). Thus, an architectural neomaterialism is not interested in what a building "means"—what architectural intention it represents—but in its performance, its material behaviour and its effects.[48] In that manner, DeLanda's neomaterialism offers, in my terminology, a kind of post-representationalism. It aims beyond a representational logic, beyond modern subject–object and man–matter distinctions, and towards a new (nonhuman) account of creativity.

The work of literary theorist Claire Colebrook, British theologian Philip Goodchild and North American comparative-literature theorist Timothy Murray have in different ways related Foucault's and Deleuze's critique of representation to theology.[49]

When Murray introduces Foucault's and Deleuze's critique of representation, he does so through Erich Auerbach's *Mimesis,* indicating that Christian and Jewish accounts of representation have affected how knowledge and truth are understood in modern Western literature. Auerbach himself never questions the logic of representation as such.

On the contrary, Auerbach wants to see a developed representation that actually may capture the complexity of reality. "What remains unprejudiced, in Auerbach's terms," Murray states, "is the 'unification' and 'simplification' of mimesis and its ability to represent reality as an external and universal constant."[50] Through Foucault and Deleuze, however, Murray leaves behind this Auerbachian assumption of a reality to represent, and introduces the notion of *theatricality*. In my terminology, then, Murray introduces a post-representational account of words and texts as theatrically expressive and creative.

My own account of the critique of representation and post-representation in Deleuze and Foucault will be introduced in chapter 3, where I present those aspects of their respective thinking that I will use and discuss in relation to theology in the coming analyses. As we shall see, Deleuze and Foucault explicitly discuss the logic of representation and introduce ways of moving beyond representational discourse. The term *post-representation* is my word for their—both shared and different—ideas of how to resist or handle what they, in different ways, describe as the logic of representation.

The fact that I use a somewhat worn linguistic construction with the prefix "post-" rather than (creatively and more affirmatively, in line with Foucault and Deleuze, perhaps) introduce a new term for the move beyond representation (as above, "neomaterialism," "theatricality" or "performativity") will be further discussed in chapter 8, but let me briefly explain this choice here. I believe that the idea of a simple move beyond the representational thought structure within theology (as suggested, for instance, by "theatricality") would take the repressive potential of Christian thinking too lightly. Furthermore, it could obscure Deleuzian and Foucauldian awareness of the liberating forces as well as the oppressive powers of representation. I have chosen a construction that is worn and negative rather than new and creative because I have found that the theological encounters studied here actually enhanced the need for a preserved awareness of both the repressive power and the liberating force of the representational logic within theology. Theological thought structures are not easily left behind; they linger on and they keep resurrecting themselves. An old and negative construction can serve as a reminder of the steadfastness

of theological thought traditions, while its dual and broken appearance, on the other hand, points towards the fact that new ideas can always be added and always extracted from old ways of thinking. In other words, it can indicate that things need not be new to be otherwise.

I will use the term *representational* (and *post-representational*) rather than *representative* (*post-representative*) despite the fact that many translators choose the word "representative" for the French *représentative* in Foucault and Deleuze. The prime reason for this is to underline, in accord with Gayatri Shakravorty Spivak's critique of Deleuze and Foucault's post-representation, that the post-representational perspective does not strive beyond political representation or the political notion of the representative (although it has political implications, and thus has affected the account of democratic representation).[51]

Spivak notes that when Deleuze and Foucault leave strictly philosophical discourse and begin to speak more freely—applying their ideas concerning reality—the notion of representation suddenly gets a bit too blurry. This could, "at least in less careful hands," as she says, support the idea that we no longer need democratic representation since representation does not work anyway: Let the poor women speak for themselves, they are free to speak, beyond representation![52] By using the word "representational," I believe I will avoid at least the facile allusion to such a simplistic notion of politics devoid of democratic representation.

Theological encounters

The first analysis, in chapter 4, enacts an encounter between the British Radical Orthodox theologian Graham Ward and Foucault. Ward is part of the Radical Orthodoxy movement that appeared in the 1990s. In a postmodern time, when Christian truth-claims were questioned in the mainstream theological debate, Radical Orthodoxy introduced a completely different approach. They set off from devout Christian faith, and also from postmodern critical theory, and used this dual outset to proclaim a return to Christian dogmatic truth. Furthermore, they suggested that an orthodox account of Christian faith is in fact the more *radical* contemporary approach—politically, theologically and

philosophically—since it offers a path at odds with certain modern and late modern societal trends.

The fact that Ward's theology is deeply influenced by Derrida motivated me to read him, especially his Christology in *Christ and Culture* and his early study, *Barth, Derrida and the Language of Theology,* together with Foucault's notions of *commentary* versus *critique* (in chapter 4). Although I do not treat Derrida in connection with Ward very extensively, an encounter between Ward and Foucault indicates, per the above, the *theological* differences between an analogical (representational) and a univocal (post-representational) approach. Possibly, the encounter will throw light on the theological implications and consequences that these different perspectives may have.[53]

My second analysis, in chapter 5, starts out in two theological endeavours inspired by Deleuze. I use these theological attempts as illuminating examples in order to discuss why contemporary theology often seems to fall into either an exclusive repetition of a singular truth, or an all-encompassing inclusivism that in the end leaves no escape for that which truly differs, or wants to differ. I suggest, however, that Foucault articulates an explanation of this phenomenon in his article on Deleuze, "Theatrum Philosophicum," which highlights these risks as embedded in certain accounts of Deleuzian thought, but also points out a post-representational account that carries neither of these problems. Thus, Foucault depicts a different way forward than the ones revealed in the theological endeavours discussed.

One of the theological examples in chapter 5 is Graham Ward, thus the implications of Ward's analogical/representational choice of path, as discussed in chapter 4, are developed in this subsequent chapter. American feminist theologian Catherine Keller, an explicit critic of Radical Orthodoxy, is the other example. In this analysis, however, the theologians serve primarily as theological examples in relation to which I discuss theological dilemmas by way of Foucault and, finally, indicate a Foucauldian/Deleuzian way forward. I will argue that it is a way of considerable theological relevance.

Around the time when Deleuze and Foucault formulated their ideas in France, across the Atlantic Ocean Thomas J. J. Altizer made himself almost impossible in the wider theological debate when he introduced

a "death of God theology." Altizer argued that God's death—with the advent of modernity—was nothing other than the fulfilment of the Christian incarnation. What is often considered a crisis of Christian thought and faith was, in Altizer's regard, the *telos* of the Christian story of redemption. In modern thinking, the different expressions of the Christian God (such as the Christian Logos, the transcendent God, the eternal Word, the Christian Law, the orthodox Christ and Christian dogmatics) were questioned and room was made for a true immanence, or in Altizer's view: a true *incarnation* was finally made possible. Thus, Altizer argued, Christianity should rejoice in the death of God.

As we shall see in chapter 6, many reacted strongly against Altizer's theology when it first appeared. In the 1960s, Altizer was invited to appear on TV shows and in debates mainly because he was considered horrendously radical and odd. Today, however, the times have caught up with Altizer's theology and his thoughts can more easily be embraced as a relevant conversation partner for contemporary theology and philosophy alike. Significantly, Altizer is an important figure in a recent essay by Žižek, and Altizer and Žižek were mutually invited to speak on the death of God at the American Academy of Religion annual conference in Montreal in November 2009.[54] Still, theologians like Mark C. Taylor and John D Caputo claim that Altizer is stuck in modernist thought. In consequence, Taylor and others suggest Altizer should move in a Derridean direction of thought in order to actually and finally leave his grand narrative of the death of God behind.

What if one would adhere to Altizer's heretic inclination, however, and instead explore his thinking through a Deleuzian univocal perspective? In the third analysis, in chapter 6, I engage Altizer with Deleuze in order to see if such an encounter may throw new light on what is often considered the most enigmatic aspect of Altizer's oeuvre.[55]

The fourth and last analysis, in chapter 7, discusses the question of affirmation versus negation: whether the complexity of life is best captured through the *via negativa* or through an affirmative creation of concepts and expressions—or whether it cannot be captured at all, yet perhaps somehow expressed through a post-representational account of repetition. The analysis starts out with theological descriptions of Foucault as a negative theologian. I explore a negative motion in

Foucault through Foucault's essay on the artist René Magritte and discuss how the negative in Foucault—what I call the repetition of phantasms—may or may not relate to theology, especially to the notion of negative theology. The connection between Foucault and negative theology has been examined before (for example, by Bradley, cited above), but never in relation to his work on Magritte, despite the fact that this essay explicitly discusses the question of affirmation versus negation in relation to the logic of representation and analogy. Finally, I draw upon Swedish theologian Emilia Fogelklou to indicate a post-representational *and* theological account of the transgressive repetition of phantasms.

The four analyses are interrelated yet distinct. They may be read separately, but if read together, implicit and explicit associations and points of correspondence appear. The gaps, fissures and occasional links between these chapters illustrate the experimental and tentative method that I find a viable approach for exploring a possible new entry into contemporary theology. It aims to explore one possibility among many rather than proclaim a particular way forward, hence the conclusions in chapter 8 merely recapture some of the key discussions in the four analyses, and finally reflect on the method as such and discuss possible implications of the ideas introduced.

Now, it is time to get closer acquainted with the aspects of representation critique and post-representation in Foucault and Deleuze (chapter 3) before we throw ourselves into the theological encounters (chapter 4, 5, 6 and 7) and finally wrap up (chapter 8).

2

Foucault and Deleuze Beyond Representation

This chapter offers an introduction to Gilles Deleuze's and Michel Foucault's critique of representation. In the analyses of the subsequent chapters, more specific notions from their respective thinking will be introduced and discussed. The present chapter, then, serves to sketch what I regard as the *critique of representation* and *post-representation* present in different ways in their thinking, respectively. Furthermore, it forms a background against which the coming analyses will be more available, regardless of the reader's former acquaintance with Foucault and Deleuze.

In the first part of this chapter, I introduce Foucault's critique of the Classical logic of representation and what I describe as his post-representational account. According to Foucault, the Classical logic of representation—which I will refer to as "early modern" rather than Classical—is a common presupposition for secular critical thought and spiritual exegesis that still lives on. If Foucault is right, one could assume that this representational logic pervades theology, no matter whether a theology of secular/critical tradition or a theology of confessional/orthodox tradition. Thus, Foucault's critique—and his suggested way forward through what he regards as openings in contemporary knowledge—could very well be of general relevance for contemporary theology.

In the second part of the chapter, I introduce Deleuze's critique of representation. Deleuze is helpful in order to detect in what sense the very Christian thought tradition resists diversity through rejecting univocity and recognizing analogy. On the contrary, however, Deleuze also addresses the question of whether and how Christian thinking might shelter difference; how the one God makes room for infinite expression.

Michel Foucault

In his introduction to *The Order of Things,* Foucault famously quotes Jorge Luis Borges' Chinese encyclopaedia, where the animals are divided into,

> a) those that belong to the Emperor, b) embalmed ones, c) tame, d) sucking pigs, e) sirens, f) fabulous, g) stray dogs, h) those included in the present classification, i) frenzied, j) innumerable, k) drawn with a very fine camelhair brush,1) *et cetera,* m) having just broken the water pitcher, n) that from a long way off look like flies.[1]

At first this passage evokes laughter. The enumeration is nonsensical —it appears to have no sense of commensurability, categorization or the most basic laws of logic. However, after having read *The Order of Things* in its entirety, the reader who returns to this initial quote has begun to see things differently. *The Order of Things* guides the reader through the history of the human sciences and describes how the laws of knowledge, categorization and language change over time. Foucault shows how the alteration of knowledge is interrelated with changes in the very account of language.

Until the end of the sixteenth century, Foucault argues, in order to achieve knowledge of the world one had to search for the interconnections—the hidden system—that was partly revealed to men through the connections between words and things. Language was then understood as having its original transparent and static form "when it was given to men by God himself, language was an absolutely certain and transparent sign for things, because it resembled them."[2] Resemblance and analogy were what connected words and things, hence these connections, in Foucault's view, were also the foundation for Scholastic and Renaissance logic and categorization—which I will refer to as "premodern" logic. According to this premodern logic, even if the proper names of things were not discovered by man, even if the signs therefore "remained silent," they were just as much there.[3] Knowledge was not dependent on man's possession of it, the words carried objective truths whether or not this was known by man. For

the Renaissance, "language is not what it is because it has a meaning," because of its representational content, but is an object studied in itself as any other natural object. Foucault exemplifies this with Petrus Ramus (or Pierre de la Ramée, 1515–72), to whom etymology has nothing to do with the meanings of words but with the intrinsic properties of letters, syllables and words.[4]

This logic of *resemblance* (Foucault's term for the logic where resemblance connects words and things, thus organizing human knowledge) was later replaced by a logic of *representation* that separated words and things, and later still—in what Foucault describes as "our" modern thought—this logic was replaced with one of *signification,* which *re*connected words and things in a new way.[5]

One example of how these changes in knowledge came to expression historically is given by Foucault in his examination of the history of natural science. Nowadays, we generally consider the natural sciences rational and comprehensible, in line with the rational and systematic spirit of, say, Linnaeus or Jonston. We might even consider natural science before these early modern contributions less informed and rather ignorant. However, when Foucault compares, for instance, Joannes Jonston's (1603–75) *Natural history of quadrupeds* of 1657 with the earlier work of Ulisse Aldrovandi (1522–1605)—regarded by Linnaeus and De Buffon as the father of natural history—he concludes that none of the facts presented by Jonston are actually omitted by Aldrovandi.[6] Only, Aldrovandi's work presents so much more besides, which makes his presentation appear slightly unreliable to us. Jonston uses twelve headings when presenting the horse; the horse's name, anatomical parts, habitat, age ranges, generation, voice, movements, sympathy and antipathy, uses, medicinal uses. Everything that is presented under these headings is included already in Aldrovandi's presentation, but to Aldrovandi—as an earlier expression of a gradually changing logic—the mythical horses, the tales of horses, the wisdom of horses are just as relevant and have a proper place in his introduction to the horse.[7]

In this manner, Foucault guides the reader through the development of the human sciences until the initial Borges quote appears as an expression of *a particular instance of rationality* (among others) rather

than an enumeration that differs from *the* rational. With a rationality based on resemblance rather than on representation or signification, the "Chinese" list of animals starts to make sense.

From materialism to materialism

Foucault's history of knowledge is—as the original French title makes clear—a history of the relation between words and things.[8] It depicts how the relationship between words and things changes over time.

Until the sixteenth century, Foucault claims, words and things are inseparable through a divine presence, a logic of resemblance. In a mysterious way, only partially unveiled to man, words and things are interconnected. Or rather, in these premodern times, language was not a complicated medium but just one object among others in God's creation. This is a kind of linguistic materialism, where the words are not merely their function or meaning—the words are not solely what they refer to—but are themselves objects of importance; they are "holy," if you will.

In early modern thought, the presupposition for understanding language and objects changed. Instead of a presupposed connection—a hidden and mysterious relation between words and things—words and things were separated through a logic of representation. It became possible to think that the words describe objects without participating in them, Foucault claims. This is a nonmaterialist account of words. The word has no deep or mystical connection to the thing it represents, nor an importance in itself as "object." "Discourse was still to have the task of speaking that which is, but it was no longer to be anything more than what it said."[9] Early modern thought assumed language's function and identity as simply that of representing things. This resulted in a linguistic representationalism rather than a linguistic materialism.

Naturally, this changed the knowledge produced. It changed how the world was examined and understood, and it explains why the science produced during this period is closer to what we would call science. Early modern logic of representation assumed that the world was there, and the scientific task for early modern man was to examine it and put it into words: the world could be represented.[10] This

is related to, yet different from, how modern science would describe its procedures.

According to Foucault, through modern science, words and things were reconnected. Through a logic of signification and meaning, words once again came to carry a certain meaning that needed to be revealed, although in a different way compared to premodern and early modern forms of representation. In modern science, the fundamental function of words is to *signify,* that is, they point beyond themselves at a certain object or phenomenon. This is not, however, transparent representation, but a way in which language once again begins to live a life of its own. In this logic of signification, words can once again be studied as words. In order to understand a word, to understand the meaning of a word, one might now use historical analyses of sediments of meaning, use, understanding and intention. The word's effect and being extend the mere representational function. Put differently, in modern thought *words demand interpretation,* or as Claire Colebrook states: "Language was not a transparent medium but was regaining its status as a being with its own force and effect."[11]

An illuminating example of this account of language is the psychoanalytical tradition, in which the words of the analysand are seen as keys to an intricate hidden historical reality of the inner self. In a sense, this opens up a new linguistic materialism in which the words, once again, become objects of study. If the first phase of linguistic materialism in pre-modern times was a search for a hidden divine system, however, then the second and modern phase was rather a study of words that reached for, and created, a systematic account of the human subject.

Foucault depicts, then, how the journey of the human sciences is a journey that begins with God and ends with the Subject. Until the end of the sixteenth century, words and their meaning belong to God. In modern thought they belong to man. The God controlling the words, possessing the knowledge of their meaning (hidden to man), is finally replaced by man, the knowing subject. Consequentially, in order for this substitution of man for God to be possible, words and things had to be *separated* from their initial mystical bond of divine and transcendent meaning, then *reconnected* in the subject through

an immanent account of meaning, that is, in a logic of signification. Paranthetically, there are interesting points of correspondence between God and man in this historical investigation. As divine knowledge is partly hidden to man, so is human knowledge in the twentieth century. Foucault famously suggests that the role of the priest guiding man in his search for knowledge about God is replaced by the therapist, guiding man in his search for the hidden truth about himself.[12]

This is not the whole story, however. Foucault argues that the movement from God to man does not imply that a humanistic choice has to be made between God and man. Foucault locates this possibility in the modern reconnection of words and things and argues that it is expressed, for instance, in modern literature. Rather than subordinating the being of language to a new object that is transcendental or absolute like the subject, writers like Stéphane Mallarmé manage to free language from any point of view, from the transcendental subject, and thus present language in its own being.[13] Put differently, it is a possibility in language based on the fact that there is a secret—or hidden—link between the death of the God that granted medieval language a stable meaning and the metaphysical role of the human subject that made modern language meaningful. The death of God foreshadows the death of man as the new Archimedean point of modern language, since a language without a theological other will inevitably lose its stability. This possibility, where the subject is radically scattered as a direct consequence of the fact that God is no longer there, anticipates Foucault's constructive vision for language. Deleuze has discussed this Foucauldian opening beyond man and God:

> But if we can imagine a third draw, the forces of man will enter into a relation with other forces again in such a way as to make up something else that will no longer be either God or man: we could say that the death of man links up with the death of God, to create new compounds.[14]

To summarize, the history of the human sciences—as the history that begins with God and ends with the subject—is habitually understood as driven by a fundamental presupposition of representation. It is driven by an idea that reality can be either simply represented through

language or more intricately detected through language. Words have the ability to capture or to reveal the truth about things. But, according to Foucault, this is not what this history *finally* tells us. Since the relation between words and things changes over time, this history of language also tells us that representation never is final.

Commentary and critique

When representation is discussed in early modern thought, this fundamental function of language was and still often is accepted. Therefore, Foucault claims, representation has been discussed in one of two ways: either through *criticism* or through *commentary.* In both modes a representational account has been the result. Since the emergence of criticism in early modern thought, these two modes have been in profound opposition.[15]

Criticism thinks of language in terms of representation and truth. It is a way to judge and profane language. The act of critique, of criticism, allows for an immanent act of judgement—a worldly, human critique of language's ability to represent the world, to represent truth. Naturally, such immanent critique of language had not been possible before the first separation of words and things, as described above—before the death of God, as the other of language—since it puts man, the thinking subject, in charge of the act of judgement.

Commentary, on the other hand, elevates and reveals the original truth of the text commented on. It repeats the truth or, to speak with a theological tongue, it repeats "the Word" that is hidden behind the many words and "halts before the precipice of the original text." If criticism profanes language, then the commentary, which has its roots in the Christian exegetical tradition, sacralises language. The commentary elevates the truth of the text itself, a truth that the commentator, the reader, is in no position to judge but only to reveal and lay bare (as in traditional readings of religious or juridical texts). While emerging alongside the tradition of criticism—and profoundly challenged by it—the commentary tradition still lives on in the present.[16]

Foucault, however, searches for a liberating view on language that moves beyond the choice between commentary and criticism—

between the sacred and the profane. The liberating moment somehow seems to lie in the freedom from the ties to representational logic. "Until the connection between language and representation is broken, or at least transcended, in our culture, all secondary languages will be imprisoned within the alternative of criticism and commentary. And in their indecision they will proliferate *ad infinitum*."[17]

Put differently, Foucault proposes if not the final possibility then at least the will to somehow reach beyond "the world of representation" and its simplistic choice between a sacralised and a profane language. He does not want to accept that the choice ultimately has to be a choice between God or man. He wants to break with the history of knowledge beginning with God and ending with man because he finds that there are "secondary languages" "imprisoned" due to that history's overarching logic of representation. Expressions are being silenced. In a major essay on Bataille, "A Preface to Transgression," which we will revisit below, Foucault notes how the choice between God and man refuses to let the death of God open a space of ongoing *transgression*. Instead, he claims, it puts man in God's place to ensure that the overarching and limiting structure remains intact.[18]

According to Foucault, in every historical moment and period there are imprisoned languages—languages that are silenced, mute, since they do not make sense in the current discourse. These languages, which are not allowed to raise their voices but still somehow remain operative, are treated as a marginal phenomenon, underneath or in the periphery of the discourse. Foucault often names this phenomenon as the *murmur* (or the anonymous murmur).[19] This peripheral mumbling reality in language—subverting the illusion of stable representation—seems to be what Foucault wishes to articulate, or rather, to let have its say. But he wishes to do so without falling back into the logic of representation and its eternal choice between commentary and critique. Thus, he wants to proceed without making the error of transgressing the limit in order to present a new truth. This means that he wants to find a language that challenges the philosopher with the utter insecurity of language. In "A Preface to Transgression," Foucault says that he reaches for a language in which:

> the philosopher is aware that 'we are not everything': he learns as well that the philosopher does not inhabit the whole language like a secret and perfectly fluent god. Next to himself he discovers the existence of a language that also speaks and that he is unable to dominate, one that strives, fails, and falls silent and that he cannot manipulate, the language he spoke at one time and that has now separated itself from him, now gravitating in a space increasingly silent.[20]

Foucault's curious 'faith' in language's ability to question the logic of representation is expressed in his fascination with contemporary writers. In chapter 3, I shall describe further the notion of *transgression* as an inescapable dimension of every limit, of every statement of certainty, that he finds in Bataille. In chapter 4, we shall encounter the notion of language as *simulacrum,* as immanent, that he and Deleuze find in Pierre Klossowski, and in chapter 6 we will touch on the idea of the *murmur* as the only way to speak the unspoken.

Foucault's belief in the transgressive and subversive force of language is also articulated in the preface to *The Order of Things,* as quoted initially. Foucault claims that Borges' enumeration gains its monstrous quality—that which evokes such laughter—when it destroys the common ground that ensures us that this could never be a coherent enumeration. Regardless of when this list is presented, it could only be presented as a list. Where could the listed things ever meet, Foucault asks, except on the page transcribing the list or through the voice reading it—where else but in this strange "non-place" that we call language, and that we trust with representing the world?[21]

To compare the Chinese list of animals to a contemporary encyclopaedic enumeration is to compare different accounts of language: language that orders things in one way is compared to a language ordering things differently. Language is and provides the kind of "non-place" where the ordering of things is possible, and as long as a representative account of language—building on analogy, similarity and repetition—is presupposed, a similar assumption must be made regarding the order of nature: the actual order of things. The things, the objects that language attempts to represent, must be

structured accordingly or else language will fail, representation will be erroneous.[22] If the world is originally chaotic, then a representational way of structuring the world necessarily fails.

In consequence, the first chapter of *The Order of Things* is an analysis of *Las Meninas* (1656), a painting by Diego Velàzquez. Foucault believes that by showing representation—and thus the shortfall and even absurdity of representation—the limits of what he describes as Classical thought will stand forth and the possibility of transgressing these limits will open up, and in *Las Meninas,* Foucault concludes: "representation (. . .) can offer itself as representation in its pure form."[23] If one makes visible the ambiguity of representation by showing how its expressions change through history, one also denotes the contingency of the current expression (I explore this idea in Foucault further in chapter 6).

Let us have a closer look at what I would describe as a post-representational move in Foucault. I find his idea and practice of handling representation well described by Deleuze in his book on Foucault.

The force of words and things

In his book on Foucault, Deleuze presents his interpretation of what makes Foucault ingenious in questioning the given. Foucault's major achievement in philosophy, according to Deleuze, is the conversion of phenomenology into epistemology.[24] Roughly, this means that Foucault, in Deleuze's view, turns things around by leaving behind completely the questions of origin and intention in relation to knowledge in order to highlight instead the rules of knowledge—the regulations even—for such ideas as intention and origin that are present in, and only in, what appears. Let me explain.

According to Deleuze, the key to Foucault's thinking is to understand how he distinguishes what Deleuze calls "language-being" from "light-being," or "statements" from "visibilities"—what Foucault would perhaps simply call the separation of "words" from "things," as above.[25] Foucault does not primarily view statements as representing the visible, but as *presenting* themselves (phenomenologically) just as light presents the visible rather than the sayable. According to

Deleuze, Foucault argues that "there is" light, and "there is" language, and the two exist in a non-relation—in an unbridgeable yet infinite asymmetry.[26] In opposition to early phenomenology, this does not entail placing either one in parenthesis (that is, saying we have no access to the reality of words and things *as such*) because according to Deleuze, Foucault's notion of being is always what appears, as sayable or seeable. Phenomenology is epistemology in the sense that the given is always already mediated by its own set of rules, and the rules are always already given. Thus, being is not a veiled, inaccessible reality; its deepest logic is accessible in its appearance. There are not things and states of things pre-existing in a savage world, but visibilities—the infinite varieties of light-being. Neither are there words and phrases referring analogically or representatively to a visible world, but a language-being with its immanent variables.[27]

Because of these two beings—the visibilities and the statements, related yet fundamentally unrelated—knowledge in Foucault is irreducibly double. According to Deleuze, knowledge in a Foucauldian perspective involves both speaking and seeing, language and light, but since they are asymmetrically related, there can be no intentionality. Intentionality collapses in the gap, the void, between speaking and seeing.

Let me give a concrete example. There is a lamp on the table next to me. I have seen this lamp many times. I have felt it with my hands when dusting it while my mind was filled with everything but dusting. I have struggled with it since the light switch sometimes gets stuck. I have stared at it when I did not know what to write, or how. At times, I look at it because I find it beautiful. I like the shape of the lampshade. I have wondered who designed it, but have never been bothered to find out. In fact, I more or less stole it from a cellar so I never really got the chance to ask questions when I first got it. There is a crack in the lampshade. The cracked side now faces the wall.

Now, does the word "lamp" capture this "visibility"? Can I honestly say that "a lamp" is *what it is* that I see when looking at this thing? Conversely, consider the word "lamp" with its many connotations of innumerable contexts, meanings, memories, and so on. Can I specify this word to you by showing you the lamp next to me? Would it capture the word "lamp"?

Basically, in Deleuze's account of language-being and light-being in Foucault, these "beings," the word and the thing, express themselves in far more complex and numerable ways than those that can be described by "translating" them into each other. That is, a word expresses so much more than the thing it is said to represent, and the thing expresses a lot more than the word describing it. *What appears* is so much more complex than what we usually consider when we say that something *is*. Thus, to view *appearance* as *being* might make the world more superficial, but hardly less complex.

Asymmetrical knowledge

Through such an account of language and its relation to the things it attempts to represent, knowledge becomes unavoidably asymmetrical. Knowledge is double. Knowledge is born out of an asymmetrical nonrelation between statements and visibilities. It is irreducibly double, and therefore knowledge is never merely the words and the things, but also the gap, the non-place between the two.[28] Words and things never fully capture each other. The words do not capture the endless expressions of the visible image as *thing,* nor does a thing ever capture the endless expressions of a *word.* It will not tell us the entire story.

As a consequence, while we are busy building explanatory bridges over the unbridgeable gap between image and language ("*this* is what it *is*"), the light-being keeps expressing itself on its own. The light-being—the visible in its own right—will suddenly enable the sight of the hitherto unseen and render a new knowledge, a new visibility possible. That which escapes our words, or our eyes, will enable what we cannot foresee. New expressions will appear, made possible by the gap between light-being and language-being. When they appear, they will come to us as a sudden break-through. It is simple and plain, an effect of the asymmetrical relation between words and things: an effect caused by the shortfall of representation.

Since this shortfall of language and representation has been habitually overlooked through the course of history, however, other explanations for these sudden appearances of new truths, these "meaning-events," have emerged. These events, these emergences of

new insights, have for instance been considered the breaking in of a "higher enlightenment," a mysterious occurrence of a divine insight or the performance of a grand intellect. Questions have been asked, presupposing either divine revelation or a stroke of genius: "However did you come to that insight?" Or, the theorist to the artist: "From whence do you get everything?"

Foucault calls these emergences of new knowledge *events;* the discontinuities in history, those events that change what was formerly taken for granted into what is no longer held true, and suddenly replaced by a new statement. (But, as chapter 4 will make clear, neither Foucault's nor Deleuze's theories of the event are restricted to this singular function.) Foucault's account of the event relates to the way in which he handled the controversy in France in the 1960s and 1970s between the more traditional approach of academic historiography, known as the "history of events," and the rising "non-event-oriented history." Instead of leaving the historical concept of "the event" behind as the non-event-oriented historians did—by declaring history's task other than that of dismantling and disclosing "the facts" of historical events—Foucault used the concept in a fashion that distinguished him from both traditions and enabled him to reintroduce the notion of chance into historical discourse.[29] There is not, Foucault says, an event to which one can add cognitive meaning. Instead, the event inscribed in language is always an alteration of meaning, of signification and truth, a "meaning-event." A meaning-event enters into our social and linguistic reality as chance and randomness; it simultaneously displaces the present and eternally repeats the infinitive.[30]

Deleuze's conceptual analysis of "light-being" and "language-being" in Foucault does, I believe, introduce a kind of "new materialism"—a *post-representationalism*—a return to words and things after the representational separation. This new materialism differs, of course, from the notion of a divine pattern or presence, hidden in words and things alike. It also differs from the idea of words as keys to the intricate system of the human self. Because in such a post-representational account, words and things are considered realities that affect our world and thought in ways we can neither overlook nor control. They do not represent a particular truth—they cannot simply be described through

definitions or illustrations—since their effect, the multiplicity of their meaning and function, exceeds our definitions and illustrations. They simply do not fit the pattern of thought that is structured through analogy, identity, similarity and resemblance—a pattern which we soon shall become more familiar with. Because, after this Deleuzian account of the Foucauldian contribution, in which Foucault really is coloured by his reader, we shall move on to Deleuze's own critique of representation.

Gilles Deleuze

When reading Foucault, one is thrown into passionate re-evaluations of history by encountering a fervent scepticism that questions every given. To read Deleuze, on the other hand, is at least initially to be struck by an affirmative creativity rather than a critical scepticism. Every book means a new set of concepts, and sometimes, as in *A Thousand Plateaus,* every new chapter, every "plateau," creates a different style and a different set of concepts. Or, rather, every plateau shows that "style" can never be separated from "content" in any simple sense since that would reinstall a dual logic of representation that separates inner truth from appearance. Moreover, it depicts that the very idea of "style" distances the reader (or viewer) from experience, it places the reader outside and above the text, and hinders an immanent reading. [31]

The four iron collars

I begin this presentation by commenting on a passage in Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition* that will help us grasp the notion from which this creative and affirmative writing eventuates. Like Foucault's historical investigations, which are of immense importance to Deleuze, Deleuze's endeavour can be described as a critique of representation. And in a similar way, as compared to Foucault, I find that this passage explains the sense in which Deleuzian affirmation is a reaction against Christian thinking.

In *Difference and Repetition,* Deleuze describes Western reason as having established a notion of "what everybody knows and no one can

deny"; that is, a presupposed, commonly shared point of reference—the implicit form of discourse.[32] It is a regulative structure that is taken for granted. More precisely, Deleuze elaborates the notion that there are four key ideas that impede true diversity in Western metaphysical thought. These ideas form a structure for thought that is resistant to the radically different; it resists that which would open thought to the radically unexpected. He calls these key ideas the "four iron collars" or the "four roots to the principle of reason," and describes them: "identity in the concept, opposition in the predicate, analogy in judgment and resemblance in perception."[33]

Western metaphysical thought is stuck, in other words, in a rationality (1) where concepts are identified in and through their defined identity (a concept is signifying and its signification determines its identity); (2) where concepts, therefore, are determined by that which they are not, that which they oppose; (3) where analogy serves as the structure for judgement, so that divergence may legitimise the judgement of an act (or object, event or person), based on that to which it is said to have an analogical correlation and from which it thus diverges; and, finally, (4) where objects perceived rely on resemblance in perception to secure their continuity, and consequentially objects are subsumed under resemblance as a structure for their legitimate change. In Deleuze's words, these four elements "form quadripartite fetters under which only that which is identical, similar, analogous or opposed can be considered different."[34]

Put somewhat differently, one can say that there is a fourfold structure within which the Western metaphysical tradition has educated its thinkers to locate and domesticate difference. This structure has, in turn, made the Western world incapable of thinking radically differently. That which falls outside of the logic of *identity, similarity, analogy* and *resemblance* simply does not exist; it is unthinkable. If it is not related to what we already know, there is no room for it in the Western metaphysical thought structure.

Deleuze's rejection of judgement correlates with his critique of representation, as well as with his critique of the notion of an infinite God. Brian Massumi explains that, to Deleuze, representational thinking "reposes on a double identity: of the thinking subject, and of

the concepts it creates and to which it lends its own presumed attributes for sameness and constancy." Massumi continues: "The subject, its concepts, and also the objects in the world to which the concepts are applied, have a shared, internal essence: the self-resemblance at the basis of identity. Representational thought is analogical; its concern is to establish a correspondence between these symmetrically structured domains. The faculty of judgement is the policeman of analogy, assuring that each of the three terms is honestly itself, and that the proper correspondences obtain. In thought its end is truth, in action justice."[35] The notion of an infinite God is the presupposition for judgement. Judgement, in turn, the presupposition that limits the expression of concepts, that obscure the infinite expressions of the univocal being: "It is not as if judgement itself were postponed, put off until tomorrow, pushed back to infinity; on the contrary, it is the act of postponing, of carrying to infinity, that makes judgement possible."[36]

Naturally, trying to think a notion of difference that falls outside of the habitual is not easy, which Deleuze is the first to admit. According to Deleuze, difference 'can become thinkable only when tamed,' and when tamed, does it then surprise us? Any notion of difference allowing for actual *difference* 'appears to exclude any relation between different and different which would allow it to be thought.' That is, if we could easily think difference, picture it, then difference would be placed within the categories of thought we already possess; it would be organized within our present structure for thought, and thus no radical difference at all. Our thinking seems to be dependent on the four iron collars, since: "Every other difference, every difference which is not rooted in this way, is an unbounded, uncoordinated and inorganic difference: too large or too small, not only to be thought but to exist"; which is why even the notion of being and existence needs to be reconsidered if one is ever to arrive at thinking differently."[37] Still, as will become obvious, Deleuze manages to make the alternative quite concrete.

In *Difference and Repetition,* Deleuze traces these roots of the principle of reason to the Platonic distinction between the model (or the Idea) and the copy, and the secure separation of both from simulacra. In Plato, there is a distinction between, for instance, the ideal horse on the one hand, any horse with its faults and imperfections on the

other, and these two—the ideal and its imperfect copy—are in turn clearly distinguished from what is not a horse but might look like one: the simulacra. The simulacra, or the "phantasm," does not simply differ from the other two, but is unrelated to the model and the copy in the sense that it belongs to a different category of thought. Thus, according to this way of reasoning—which Deleuze opposes—to relate the simulacra to the ideal is a mishap, an act of stupidity or misunderstanding.[38]

This kind of rationality is, for example, what makes the following coherent: there is an original painting, there are copies of that painting, and then there are paintings claiming to be the original, or copies of the original, but that simply are not, at all, the same painting. Or, another example: there is the ideal woman, and then there are imperfect women differing from the ideal, both of which are clearly separated from a mad woman on the street who claims that *she* is the ideal woman, but who simply does not make any sense at all.

Deleuze suggests that the moral and societal motivation behind Plato's separation between the model and the copy is left behind with Aristotle. In Aristotelian thought, the separation is taken as mere presupposition.[39] But this also means that the devastating separation in Plato has to be considered in itself the result of philosophical creativity (not yet a set frame for reason), while in Aristole it has become petrified and stifling for creative thought.[40] After Aristotle, thinking in any other way than through the separation is simply not rational. With Aristotle, this reason becomes *what everybody knows, no one can deny.* Hence, what Deleuze names the *world of representation* emerges with Aristotle and is later deepened by Christian thinkers like Thomas Aquinas; this, in turn, is how Christian thinking becomes the principal arena for representational thinking.[41]

How, then, does this connect with the explicit critique of representation? Representation is what makes this form of separating reason coherent, as well as what depicts its limits. The word horse *represents* the ideal horse and places both the object—the actual horse—and the concept in the hierarchical structure of model and copy, separating both from the simulacra.

In the work of Aristotle-influenced Christian thinkers, Deleuze suggests, the presupposed structure of model and copy and its exclusion

of simulacra from reason takes the form of a divine theory of analogy. That is, with the developed Christian thought, reason is constructed by way of analogy. In Aquinas, for instance, analogy grounds and legitimates the use of human attributes to make deductions concerning God, whose being is wholly different from human beings. According to Deleuze, this analogical account makes God radically different, yet not altogether dissimilar. Man and God are clearly separated according to their ontological status (God as infinite versus man as finite), yet closely related through the unique and divinely granted human capability of grasping something of God's nature. Even though man cannot grasp the divine in essence, there can be no absolute line of discrimination between them.

Much later, in Kant—despite his revolutionary Copernican turn, placing thought safely in the realm of the categories and concepts of human reason—the basic structure for thinking difference still stands. According to Deleuze, Kant maintains the four key ideas of Western reason. The only modification in Kant regarding difference is that difference is now treated as conceptual difference, and according to Deleuze it is inscribed in the concept in general, making the idea of difference as such subsumed under the identity of the concept.[42] Difference in Kant is thus subordinate to the idea that every concept has an identity in accordance with which it should be understood in order to be rightly understood. In line with this, difference is not altogether different, but ordered into the schedule of the four iron collars.

The univocity of being

Deleuze also develops the idea of a tradition of univocity, however, emerging alongside and opposing the tradition of representation.[43] The tradition of univocity runs from post-Thomistic theologians, such as Duns Scotus and William of Ockham, via Spinoza, Nietzsche and Heidegger all the way up to Deleuze himself.[44] Before we proceed, let me underline that a theologically informed reader might not quite recognize this portrait of Christian history as it is depicted below. First, the description of the Scholastic debates will be simplifying, as I see no need for an in-depth orientation at this point. Second, though considered

offensive by some theological traditions, Scotus, and later Spinoza and Nietzsche—who, in Deleuze's view, follow the unorthodox Scotist path—have had a deep impact in the history of Christian theology. The provocation of their work has breathed new life into Christian faith and theological production. As a matter of fact, many theologians claim that Scotist univocity has shaped mainstream currents of theological traditions of thought. British theologian Catherine Pickstock, herself critical of the nonrepresentational notion of univocity, even suggests that Duns Scotus has *dominated* Christian thought ever since his entry on the theological scene: "there is a certain middle ages [meaning Scotus'] which has never ceased to be dominant."[45] However, whether Deleuze's presentation of Scotus and the Scholastics is adequate or not, it certainly offers a creative and instructive entrance into Deleuzian thought; so let me sketch the scene in relation to which Deleuze's account of Scotus' univocity of being may be understood.

In Scholastic debates, Deleuze suggests, the immanent tradition can be singled out from the transcendent tradition, which was to become the Christian orthodox trajectory.[46] John Duns Scotus (1266–1308) introduces his notion of the "univocity of being" in his *Opus Oxoniense*.[47] (This Scotist notion temporarily serves as a key term in Deleuze's philosophy.)[48] Scotus' notion of the univocity of being derives from a Scholastic debate regarding the nature of being. In what sense are beings Being, and in what sense does Being differ from being to being? That is, can one say that God *is* in the same way a man *is?* Is man's being the same as a flower's being? The three Scholastic responses to the question of being revolved around three key terms: *equivocity, univocity* and *analogy.*[49]

The high medieval position, with its roots in Platonism and Aristotelianism, was analogy. According to analogical theology, God's being is of another order than created being, though human language and rationality participate in the higher reality that orders and structures earthly reality. In that sense reason should not abstain from labouring to get a deeper grasp of the divine through the earthly means of language. The basic point of dispute, then, was whether or not it is rational at all to claim that God's being can be different from other forms of being. According to those who challenged analogy, being is

always being. This led to the idea that God's being has to be of the same order as created being. But if God *is* in the same sense a flower *is,* does that not constitute pantheism and finally even an atheism? Must not God's 'being' somehow be different from other beings' 'being,' since otherwise God will not be God?

Duns Scotus nonetheless advocated the *univocity of being* as a response to this question; being has only one sense, being is the same for all there is, whether God or flower. For this, Scotus was deemed heretic. The univocity of being implied a pure immanence, which is why Scotus, in Deleuze's reading, had to try to escape pantheism "in accordance with the requirements of Christianity."[50] If God's existence does not differ from other existences then God is as dependent on the materiality and physicality of this world as any other existence and, in consequence, is deprived of authority as well as of agency. Furthermore, in a world where God has no transcendent authority, what about a king or a bishop whose authority is established in God's name? According to the opposition, the univocity of being ultimately made God dispensable; it threatened the hierarchical structure of the world, and thus threatened societal order in general.

A contrary solution to the problem of God's being (or, from another point of view, one embedded in the notion of univocity) was provided by the equivocity position. Advocates of the *equivocity of being* resolved the notion of revelation by claiming that being is different for different beings; the being of God's revelation has no resemblance to the being of, for instance, a plant. This position basically responded to the problem of revelation as a paradoxical event, in Christ as well as in Scripture, where the divine is revealed to man without losing—from an equivocal standpoint—its absolute alterity, its fundamental otherness. (If viewed as a univocal solution to the paradoxical otherness of revelation *within* being, this is an even more powerful way to preserve church authority: through the notion of univocity, since human ratio has no access whatsoever to the divine paradox, humanity needs to rely completely on the church's administration of the sacraments and mediation of divine revelation, but this is beside Deleuze's point.) If God's being is nothing whatsoever like human being, however, how can we speak about God at all?

The third position, ascribed to Thomas Aquinas (1225–74) and later developed by Thomistic thinkers, was the analogical. According to the third position, the conceptual relation between beings was neither considered univocal nor equivocal, but analogical: there is an analogical resemblance between the different senses of being, an analogy that enables conceptual relation without hazarding the eminence and otherness of God. This middle way is what finally came to be the position of Christian orthodoxy, while the two extremes were considered heterodox.[51] In the course of time, two differing approaches appeared on this narrow path of orthodoxy, one affirmative based on Aquinas' notion of analogy, and one negative (for example, in Meister Eckhart) focusing the elevation of God's eminence or otherness, an approach now generally referred to as *negative theology*.

An obvious problem arises with the notion of univocity described above: If being pertains in the same sense to all there is, how can we speak about different things? How can we categorize the world, speak of different phenomena? Is not categorization as such necessarily based on a logic of analogy? Well, to Deleuze this is not a problem. If being is one and pertains in the same sense to all there is, then this makes room for so much more than our concepts of identity can ever hold. Instead of being limited by identity (analogy and separation), in a univocal account concepts open up for multiplicities and endless differences. With a univocal notion of being, there will be no transcendent notion, whether of God or man, limiting the endless expressions of life. A univocal notion of being is not expressed through a set structure of analogy—human or divine—but through the intensities, modalities and individuating differences of the one being.[52] With this account of being, being is difference itself.[53] Being is *becoming* and the power of representation is broken.

A representational ontology based on the principle of analogy, on the other hand, assumes that God and the creation are two different ways of Being. Accordingly, in Kristien Justaert's words: "One way of Being—that is, God's way—is considered to be 'higher' than the other (the being of the creature)."[54] According to Deleuze, Scotus introduces being as a univocal plane on which being is one but the expressions of this being are precisely therefore infinite.[55] The univocal plane forestalls

the Deleuzian notion of the "plane of immanence," which depicts being as an infinite plane of affirmation precisely because it has no outside, no transcendent dimension to which it relates. Instead, the transcendent function is "folded" into it.[56] Grand notions such as God or the subject are nothing but "folds" on this planar surface, hence they are also contingent and ultimately revealing of the unlimited potentiality of being (as becoming), as well as the unlimited potential of conceptual expression. To repeat these notions is therefore to repeat and affirm difference.

With God, everything is permitted

Accordingly, while explicitly accusing theology of hindering the diversity of expression, Deleuze also reverses the Dostoevskian statement, "Without God, everything is permitted," and says the opposite: "With God, everything is permitted."[57] He locates what he calls a creative atheist force in the realm of theism.[58]

Through the affirmation of univocal being and the plane of immanence, Deleuze notes the creative and affirmative force—beyond representation—in theology, as well as in its notion of transcendence. While critiquing theology for limiting thought, on the one hand, from the viewpoint of his own notion of affirmation, he shows, on the other, how a different understanding is always at hand and is always productive.[59]

Deleuze detects a creative atheist force of theism, for instance, in the history of art, which he exemplifies with the theologically dissident baroque paintings of El Greco (1541–1614), the Spanish painter originally from Crete. Painters like El Greco, Deleuze says, though constrained by the Catholic Church, could adhere literally to the idea that God must not be represented: "With God—but also with Christ, the Virgin and even Hell—lines, colours, and movements are freed from the demands of representation. The Figures are lifted up, or doubled over, or contorted, freed from all figuration."[60] When painting the divine, these artists could take literally the idea that God cannot be represented, hence the freedom of expression was infinite.[61] It was, Deleuze says, "a properly pictoral atheism."[62]

Thus, Deleuze illuminates a subversive force in theism—through the one God enabling infinite expression—a force Deleuze calls *atheist*. According to Deleuze, the question of God is not only the question of a problematic transcendence limiting thought. It is also the question where everything ultimately is at stake. Which is why Deleuze can state with Nietzsche that "the phrase 'God is dead' is not a speculative proposition but a dramatic proposition; the dramatic proposition *par excellence*."[63]

As a dramatic proposition, the death of God has nothing to do with whether God does or does not exist. In fact, God cannot be made the object of synthetic knowledge without death and timeliness entering into him. This means that the question of God's existence is unintelligible before the death of God and irrelevant after. The proposition itself is instead a drama of existence, death and resurrection, a drama of the divine entering time and the human realm of mortality.[64] That is, if synthetic knowledge is characterized by the possibility of determining whether a statement is true or false by recourse to experience, then God needs to somehow enter human experience—enter the logic of human experience—in order for any synthetic statement (like "God is dead" or "God exists") about God to be possible. If God has entered into the realm of human logic, and thus has allowed death and timeliness to enter into "him," then God is already among the mortals and thus no longer the God we know as above the timely. The question of God's existence is therefore nonsensical before God has entered the human logic—and has died as eternal God—and irrelevant after, since God then is already mortal.

Relating this reasoning to the notion of representational logic, however, the reasoning above is not an example of the logic of immanence but of representation. In the framework of an immanent logic, the death of God would be the drama of the finite God entering the infinite expressions of mortality. God enters into a synthesis with life and death, hence the proposition "God is dead" *is* synthetic, but as such, according to Deleuze on Nietzsche, this proposition is essentially pluralist and multiple: "When gods die, they always die many kind of deaths."[65] The expression has, in other words, many different meanings in its many different historic and linguistic settings.

This also means that when God enters the infinite potential of the univocity of being, this entry gives birth to the absolute God, which, in turn, means that the notion of God becomes absolute only after it has been put in contrast to the potential of its own mortality and thus died as eternal and immortal. Even the absolute God, then, is preceded by and implies a difference or plurality—created in and out of the encounter with its own contingency, and thus with its infinite potential of expression. In this sense, the story of the death of the Christian God is a story of many deaths. This, in turn, is perhaps the reason why there is a creative atheist force at work in the midst of the most rigid theism that governed El Greco and made possible, for instance, the painting of *Espolio*.[66]

El Greco's *Espolio* (1577–79) was meant to be an altarpiece for the cathedral of Toledo in Spain. This forceful painting, dominated by colour, pictures the moment before Jesus is nailed to the cross. Jesus is stunningly and forcefully red, yet somehow vulnerably exposed. He holds his hand in a blessing gesture over the head of a young man who prepares the wood of the cross to receive the nail that will be driven through Jesus' feet. El Greco has painted Jesus surrounded by people, some even standing behind with their heads above Christ, which indicates a provocative subordination. For this reason El Greco's art was for several years banned from the Church. Nevertheless, the critique could be expressed, and in Deleuze's view, it was the notion of the one unrepresentable God that made it possible.

The repetition of difference

Initially, I described Deleuze's writing as creative and affirmative. The works that express this creativity the most are those co-written with the psychoanalyst Felix Guattari—with whom Deleuze wrote *What Is Philosophy?* in which their shared philosophical position is more explicitly introduced.

The task of philosophy, they write, is to create concepts. Not to construct concepts that will modify and renegotiate those constructed by philosophical predecessors, but to create concepts that will live and affect the world, since concepts are unavoidably creative and

expressive.[67] Given the notions presented thus far, what does it mean to say, as Deleuze and Guattari do, that concepts are creative—that the task of philosophy is that of creating concepts? And what difference does it make? In what way is this affirmative creation a critical endeavour?

While Deleuze recognises the power of critique as the act of tracking down weaknesses and detecting incoherencies, like Foucault above, he does not finally believe in its force. He suggests that the very act of critique itself is locked up in a dual representational logic in which the critic depends on its object.[68] To simplify this argument, one could say that a critic who looks for weaknesses and incoherencies might manage to turn the present hierarchy on its head, saying what used to be considered good now is bad, that what used to be true is now false, but the structure remains and the new regime is merely a reversal of the old. Along these lines of Deleuzian thought, such argumentation is based on a logic of judgement in a world of representation—it is subsumed under the law of *identity, similarity, analogy* and *resemblance.*

Affirmation, on the other hand, is based on a univocal being of infinite expression, a univocal being that by expressing itself constantly changes the world. In an affirmative account, concepts are not identified through their defined identity but through their effects. Similarity is an illusion or a construction deriving from an urge to organize a world of infinite diversity.

The notion of signification determining conceptual *identity* is merely a limited way of viewing the multiple effects of language. A logic of simple opposition, wherein concepts are determined by that which they are not, that which they oppose, misses out on *what is,* or the actual work of words that reaches beyond the laws of opposition.

An *analogical* account of language serves the idea of the "God of judgement" so that divergence—*this* identity differing from *that* identity—may legitimise the final and even transcendentally motivated judgement of an act, an object, an event or a person; *this* is good, *that* is evil. In an affirmative account, on the other hand, *a* woman, for instance, is not necessarily related to *the* Woman, but to the infinite expression of being in this singular woman as *a woman*.

Finally, in an affirmative account, an object is not limited to *similarity* in change; that is, an object does not stop being a chair and

turn into a table when too radically changed. It does not stop changing as chair-identity and start anew as a table-identity until it ends its days as wood, but is all along an expression of the multiplicity of being. There is not a succession of identities that marks out and defines the being and changes of an object. Rather, the multiplicity of its expressions is its *virtuality*. The idea that it is *either* this *or* that, either then or now, is *actual,* yet not in any sense truer than its virtual multiplicity. A table that used to be a chair is not simply a table, nor really a chair, not only then or only now; not merely the memory of a fantastic dinner, nor merely the tears of another, not only the tired grandfather finally getting to rest his legs, nor merely the piece of furniture that looked like a horrid monster in the dark. It is not one or more identities, but the index of a multiplicity. Thus, in an affirmative account, its legitimate change is endless.

Deleuze underlines that there are still hierarchies and distributions in univocal being, but since the outset is another, the notions of hierarchy and distribution change as well.[69] There is no set hierarchy, no final distribution, since *difference comes before being*. The notion of being is an actuality indicating a virtuality of endless expressions. Repetition is the repetition of difference. To repeat a law, a concept or an absolute, is the repetition of difference because every time a concept is repeated it will have a different meaning, a different effect and thus, the repetition will reveal its contingent and changing essence rather than its constancy.

Approaching theology

In the above I have gathered perspectives from Foucault and Deleuze respectively that in different ways mark out and critique a logic of representation. This logic is in the above described as at once dualist and analogical, which means that it both separates and relates. In other words, on the one hand words, things, expressions, experiences, animals and human beings are separated, yet on the other hand, and at the very same time, they are analogically related.

On the one hand, man is separated from God; man is an imperfect image or representation of God. Just as *this woman* is separated from

that woman, and is a representation that differs from *women in general. Life on earth* is separated from, and merely a deficient representation of, *life in heaven,* and so on. On the other hand, however, man and God (a *woman* and *women, life on earth* and *life in heaven*) are analogically related and thus comparable. There is a common ground on which each expression can be judged in relation to other expressions, or where one expression can be compared to other expressions through resemblance.

Thus, the common ground is at one and the same time the ground for inclusion and exclusion. The urge to include all and the urge to separate and categorize, are intertwined in representational logic, as I understand it. Representational logic offers a common ground for difference; one may differ from the ideal and thus be excluded from the norm—one expression of life can differ from those expressions of life that are analogically related to it—but one cannot differ altogether. Every expression is bound to find its place in the structure that precedes it or it will not exist at all. No difference is too great to fit into this thought structure, which is nice, but at a high cost; no expression will ever be acknowledged lest it may also be judged according to the current normative system. Furthermore, there is no way out of the normative system even for those expressions who want to differ.

As we have seen, in different ways Foucault and Deleuze indicate that such a representational structure for thought is historically Christian. Thus, if Foucault and Deleuze are right, theology that aspires to truly open to diversity appears to be in a rather tricky situation. The attempts to resolve a rigid exclusivism with an embracing inclusivism will, according to such a reasoning, only strengthen the common ground on which both these notions rest. If one replaces a Christian approach that explicitly excludes—for instance, homosexual love—with an approach that universally includes and embraces, all this may contribute in the end to the repression of difference. Such an inclusive approach will possibly not finally make room for those expressions of life that actually differ, or want to differ, from a Christian representational norm.

However, Foucault's and Deleuze's critique of representation also indicates inherent points of escape: there *is* always a way out. In the

words of this book, then, the logic of representation also holds a *post-representational* opportunity. Because, while the representational thought structure hinders us from thinking beyond the choice between inclusion and exclusion and the choice between man and God, it does not necessarily hinder *expression* from reaching beyond these boundaries.

Each time a woman, a God or a life is expressed, it is differently expressed. Each time a God or a woman (to stick to these examples) appears, it appears in a different situation with a different expression, hence even the repetition of an ideal or a timeless truth is impossible as anything other than a repetition of difference. Every woman indicates a multiplicity of women, and each God indicates a multiplicity of Gods. In consequence, these expressions, along with their ideals and inherited truths, are not necessarily normative but creative. Every expression is an expression of multiplicity. It brings about a universe each time it appears; hence, in a sense, the repetition of inherited truths weakens them *as truths*. Every repetition of a truth may call to mind the infinite ways and places in which it can be true, and the infinite ways and places in which it is not true, or not true anymore, and in consequence, every appearance of a given serves to show that the representational thought structure of analogy and dualism—which often still seems intact—is, in fact, an illusion.[70] Or rather than speak of "illusion," since that word kind of loses its meaning, the impossibility of repeating truths indicates that representational thought structure is not the bottom line in contemporary thought.

According to Foucault's history of knowledge, as this is retold above, history shows that even when the logic of representation is dominant, it is constantly transgressed. There are events, expressions, gaps and fissures in what Foucault calls Classical thought—events that indicate that there is no final higher truth separating heaven and earth, this from that, in a dualistic pattern. Nor is there a common origin or a common ground; we are not all the same and may not all be included. Instead, from a post-representational perspective life is a plane, to use a Deleuzian term introduced above, a surface where new things do happen, where judgement is irrelevant and where one actually might be radically surprised.

Post-representation and theology

It is soon time to let these ideas that I regard as post-representational encounter contemporary theology. But what might one hope to achieve through such encounters?

The aim of bringing these perspectives into theology could be to perceive the creative force of representation, in line with the ideas presented above. One could aspire to perceive some of the multiple potential that gets lost in an account of representation as final. The aim could be to experiment with the idea of letting repetition make room for those expressions that are being silenced due to a logic of representation, where in some sense *this* always can be narrowed down to *that*. The aim could be to note that every concept *creates* a world (instead of adhering to the notion that only some concepts correctly *represent* the world). To perceive that a singularity creates a universe, rather than to note how the particular points towards the general norm. It could mean at least trying to reach beyond the choice between man and God, beyond the choice between critique and commentary and beyond the choice between an all-encompassing inclusivism versus an exclusive repetition of the one truth. So, let me turn to the theological encounters to see if any of this occurs.

3

Graham Ward: A crack in the commentary

In this chapter I bring the Christology of Radical Orthodox theologian Graham Ward—as introduced in his book *Christ and Culture* (2005)—to meet with Foucault's notions of commentary and criticism. Through the Foucauldian notion of the commentary I endeavour to show that Ward's text creates a certain discourse for the reader to enter. I will also suggest that this discourse is contradicted and questioned by the very truth the text presents. Through my reading, thus, I will try to show that Ward's Christology is in a sense (and in line with his own account of theology) at the very same time necessary *and* impossible.[1]

With the help of Foucault's theoretical framework, however, I will suggest a reinterpretation of Ward's notion of theology as necessary and impossible. I thereby find that my reading registers some of the differences between a post-representational account of theology, gained from a Deleuzian/Foucauldian perspective, as contrasted with an account of theological representation inspired by Derridean thought.

Introducing Ward

Graham Ward (b. 1955) is a British theologian associated with the Radical Orthodoxy movement, which broadly speaking is part of a postliberal and postsecular tendency in contemporary international theology. The prehistory of this movement goes back to 1990, when John Milbank's work *Theology and Social Theory* appeared. The notion of Radical Orthodoxy came through as a programmatic label in the wake of the publication of a collection of essays in 1999 entitled *Radical Orthodoxy: A New Theology,* edited by John Milbank, Catherine Pickstock and Graham Ward. Before entering the analysis of Ward's

later work, *Christ and Culture,* let me give a brief background to his theology. Regardless of how the individual contributions of the Radical Orthodoxy will be considered and remembered in the future, I believe they will all be invaluable in understanding this particular period in Western theology. In that sense, the work of Graham Ward from this time is a key to a part of Western Christian history.

Doing the impossible

The 1990s was a time in Western theology dominated by an ambiance of liberal radicalism, influenced by the larger group of death of God theologians with whom Altizer is often connected (to be addressed in chapter 5).[2] In addition to Altizer, there was the British theologian Don Cupitt, for instance, who rejected the transcendent God and offered a purely immanent theology. Another characteristic voice was that of Bishop John Shelby Spong, who was influential at the time, especially in the Swedish context. Spong declared a radically liberal approach towards Christian doctrine with titles like *Rescuing the Bible from Fundamentalism* (1992), *Why Christianity Must Change or Die* (1998), *A New Christianity for a New World: Why Traditional Faith Is Dying and How a New Faith Is Being Born* (2001). Rejecting the truth claims of modern and premodern theology, these theologians offered a postmodern theology liberated from what they regarded as limiting and even evil tendencies of traditional faith (such as fomenting fundamentalism and oppression).

Radical Orthodoxy appeared in this context. In a postmodern climate, when Christian truth claims were not only frowned upon but even considered irrelevant—since the very basis for exclusive truth claims was considered eradicated—this movement turned things around. Radical Orthodoxy loudly proclaimed a return to dogmatic Christian truth by way of postmodern philosophical argumentation. Moreover, they aimed to show that an orthodox account of Christian faith, as the one true outset for viewing the world (as well as any other discipline or science), is in fact a deeply radical contemporary approach, theologically as well as politically and philosophically—as contrasted with liberal theological rejection of Christian identity. For

the purpose of the theme dealt with in this book, it is interesting to note that Duns Scotus' rejection of analogy (hallowed by Deleuze, as we saw in chapter 2) is a frequent target of Radical Orthodox critique; for example, in Pickstock's *After Writing* and Milbank's Theology and Social Theory.[3] And in fact, Ward's theological framework has been explicitly analogical since his earliest study, which took Karl Barth's doctrine of analogy as its beginning point.

Ward began his research with a philosophical, language oriented examination of Christian theology and representation in *Barth, Derrida and the Language of Theology* (1995). After this philosophical assessment of Christian representation, he moved to questions regarding Christian belief and Christian life in a more direct sense in *Cities of God* (2000) and *Cultural Transformation and Religious Practice* (2004). *True Religion* (2002) deals with the notion of "true religion" in relation to various contemporary expressions of religion and spirituality, such as theme parks, plays, poetry, fundamentalism, consumerism, and so on. *Christ and Culture* (2005) offers a Christology for the contemporary cultural setting. I find that *Christ and Culture,* which will be a focus in this chapter, in many ways captures the core of Ward's theological character: his wit, his faith, theoretical depth but also his experimentalism and creativity.

Ward's aim with these works is not to establish an unshakable foundation for theology, yet it is an attempt at a Christian non-nihilist cultural criticism. In whatever way Ward's work from this period will be regarded in the future, it does—together with other Radical Orthodox contributions—form a landmark in twenty-first century theology, just as did Altizer's work in the 1960s. In this period Ward introduces a new way of doing theology in a postmodern context. In *Cities of God* he sets off in a contemporary urban milieu, yet by taking his point of departure in classic Christian theology (of a basically Augustinian and Thomistic type), he critiques numerous theological attempts to address postmodernity and offers a different contemporary Christian approach. He himself writes as a contemporary theologian but he challenges several aspects of secular postmodernity and offers (especially in *Cultural Transformation and Religious Practice*) a distinctively Christian approach to contemporary urban culture and

politics. In 2006, Ward published *Religion and Political Thought* (co-authored with Michael Hoeltzl). The title is indicative of his move towards an account of Christian discipleship as a *political* discipleship. Thus, in Ward's work until now we see a constant *Christian* approach to the world, but there is a notable movement from a close linguistic-philosophical reading of Barth, set up in order to extract a new account of Christian representation, towards a political Christian discipleship engaged in contemporary culture.

The title of Ward's *Christ and Culture* is a nod to Richard H. Niebuhr's Christological classic of 1951, identically entitled. The intention of this reference is to reclaim the area of cultural theology, distinguishing it from Niebuhr's methodological presupposition that there has to be a division between Christ on the one hand and culture on the other. Against this separation, Ward underlines their *conjunction*—the fact that the two never can be separated: "If all things exist in Christ, then the cultural is not something entirely separate from him; the cultural is that through which God's redemptive grace operates."[4] That is to say, for Ward, culture *is* Christ.

The appearance of Ward and Radical Orthodoxy in the mid-1990s was, in a sense, received with open arms both by critics and by followers. Both sides welcomed, and apparently longed for, a "proper" theological debate. The arrival of Radical Orthodoxy created (or possibly only exposed) a divide within theology: one either loved them or hated them. Some, so it seemed, even loved to hate them.

The commentator

This section relates Foucault's notion of the commentary with Ward's opening chapter of *Christ and Culture* to show in what sense this text creates a discourse that places it in a commentary tradition.

Ward's discursive formation

The first chapter of Ward's *Christ and Culture* opens with a phonetic Greek verse from the Gospel of Mark: *En ho metro metreite metrethesetai umin kai prostethesetai umin* (Mark 4:24). Beneath the verse Ward

states: "No commentator has adequately been able to 'explain' it: 'The difficulty about 4:24 still remains.'"[5] In opposition to commentators who suggest that the presence of this verse in Mark—by many considered enigmatic—sums up "Mark's clumsiness as an editor," Ward implies a different reading. It is a reading that will not clear up what Ward describes as the ambiguities of the verse, but will nonetheless render it more comprehensible and even important for the gospel as a whole. In other words, Ward indicates that he will offer a possible solution to what he regards as the problem of Mark 4:24.[6]

How can Ward, who has established himself as a theoretically schooled postmodern thinker, begin in "the problem of Mark 4:24"?[7] That is to say, how can "the problem of Mark 4:24" be an interesting problem for postmodern theology? Ward's starting point provides a good illustration of the Radical Orthodox endeavour in that it does not start with the *problem* of theology, but rather with what Radical Orthodox theologians self-confidently define as the *heart* of theology. Like many radical theologians before him, Ward does not assume that a theological outset needs to be negotiated and motivated in order to be of contemporary relevance. On the contrary, Ward starts within a seemingly irrelevant and exclusively theological problem, and by doing so, he says that theology is not a *problem* but a *reality*. Theological discourse is just as legitimate as any other in the postmodern world. Furthermore, in that sense the opening of Ward's Christology depicts a development within his Radical Orthodox endeavour.

By 2005, Ward's perspective was established and he no longer needed to appeal to contemporary readers as he did in his opening sentence in *The Postmodern God* of 1997: "Surfing the net is the ultimate postmodern experience."[8] In Ward's later work, theology needs no excuses or pleasing contextualisations—it just *is*. So, the reader—if theologically initiated enough to keep on reading after the opening verse in ancient Greek—goes to the bookshelf, grabs her Bible and looks up the verse (as her Greek has become a bit rusty). Thus, Ward has directed the reader towards what Foucault would call "the primary narrative"—sacred scripture.

In three simple and concrete ways, the first few sentences of Ward's Christology marks out a discourse. It is a discourse in which, first, the

Bible is introduced as the Christological source—it is the source of knowledge about Christ. Second, language—more precisely the ancient Greek language—is the medium for this knowledge. Third, a learned authority—here Ward himself—is needed to reveal the message of the source by way of the arduously manoeuvred medium: the ancient Greek language. The reader who does not know her Bible or her Greek will need the authority in order to gain access to the knowledge about Christ that, according to Ward, could be hidden in what he describes as the enigmatic Mark 4:24. To that extent, I believe that Ward, in the opening of his Christology, could be described as "a commentator" rather than "a critic," if we recall Foucault's distinction introduced earlier.

Let me review it briefly. In *The Order of Things,* Foucault shows how the logic of representation gradually changes in Western Classical knowledge. When the representational function of language is discussed through history, Foucault claims, it is done in one of two ways: through *criticism* or through *commentary.*[9] Criticism speaks of language in terms of representation and truth; thus judges and profanes it. The act of critique is immanent; it is a human critique of language's ability to represent knowledge and truth. Criticism puts man, the thinking subject, in charge of the act of judgement: Is this text true? Is it relevant? Is it any good?

The commentary, on the other hand, "halts before the precipice of the original text."[10] Its task is not to judge but to elevate and lay bare the original truth of the text commented on, and thus to reiterate its original truth. Criticism profanes language, Foucault says, while the commentary, deriving from the Christian exegetical tradition, sacralises it. The commentary elevates the *original*—the truth of the text itself, a truth that the commentator, the reader, is in no position to judge but only to reveal and lay bare.

When Ward proffers his understanding of Mark 4:24, he does not indicate that he will read it as would a critic—read it and judge it, looking for weaknesses or inconsistencies as, for instance, is done by the historical-critical exegetes whom Ward opposes, those who question the verse's presence on historical and editorial grounds.[11] Instead, he suggests he will read it to discover an inherent message. In that regard,

Ward places himself in a commentary tradition. In fact, his apologetic agenda is explicit already in the introduction to the *Christ and Culture:* "I would like to think that the essays collected here share something of the imaginative energies that characterised those early Christian apologetics. Like them, I seek to define a Christology through a defence of the Christian faith."[12] Like the early apologists, Ward aspires to defend Christian faith.

In *The Discourse on Language* (published in 1970, four years after *The Order of Things*), Foucault develops the notion of the commentary and suggests that there hardly exists a society without primary narratives: "told, retold and varied; formulae, texts, ritualised texts to be spoken in well-defined circumstances; things said once, and conserved because people suspect some hidden secret or wealth lies buried within."[13] Though permanent in their status as primary narratives, Foucault notes that these narratives are open to perpetual reinterpretation through commentaries.[14] According to Foucault in this later text, *the commentary* captures the interpretation's function of instigating new discourses, but it does so by adding the interpretation needed for the text to be revived and have its position secured in the new discourse.[15] The "commentary's only role is to say *finally* what has silently been articulated *deep down*. It must—and the paradox is ever-changing yet inescapable—say, for the first time, what has already been said, and repeat tirelessly what was, nevertheless, never said."[16] Thus, by reinventing the primary narrative, the commentary repeats the narrative and establishes its status *as* primary narrative. The commentary can only say something other than the primary narrative, provided it lets the narrative itself speak. Subsequently, the possible statements in such a discourse are limited in a paradoxical way; one can only say something new provided there is good reason to believe it has already been said. Ultimately, when speaking of a text with the status of a primary narrative, one can only repeat the origin or else leave the discourse of the primary narrative altogether.

By starting his Christology in a central Christian narrative, Ward simultaneously places himself in the middle of the Christian discourse as commentator, and shows his will to reinforce the Christian narrative as an authoritative primary narrative. He uses Scripture as the point of

departure for his own text and reproduces the authority of Scripture by his uncommented-on use of it as authority. The notion that Scripture carries some kind of inherent truth (although not a single or simple truth) is presupposed—and of course shared by many of his readers. Furthermore, Ward establishes himself as the commentator whom the believer needs in order to reach the understanding of the primary narrative that he says he has discovered in the ambiguity of Mark 4:24. He places himself, as author-subject, in the commentary tradition rather than in the tradition of critique, and thus breathes new life into this tradition in a postmodern context, which is in line with the Radical Orthodox aim. In that sense Ward's opening is as orthodox as it can be: it produces orthodoxy, and more specifically, it produces a Radical Orthodoxy at odds with contemporary thought. Ward begins in the "primary narrative" and positions himself as commentator in relation to it. Simply, he assumes the Bible's importance and says he will read it apologetically rather than critically.

The commentator

The opening sentences of Ward's first chapter provide merely one example of how he, in my view, appears as commentator in the text. In Foucault's account, the commentator elevates the text as such, and uses his or her own authority to (seemingly) lay bare the truth that was already there. In that sense, the commentator needs to establish his or her own authority in order to enable an encounter with the commentary produced. Ward, I believe, explicitly (whether consciously or unconsciously) strengthens his own authority and relevance as commentator. Let me refer a few of the places where I find that this is done.

In the introduction, Ward explains how his essays on Christology in the volume "are trying to correct a tendency in Christological thinking since at least Schleiermacher."[17] With his *Christ and Culture,* Ward attempts to correct a Christian misconception dating back, at least, to the nineteenth century. The introduction sketches how he will go about it, and what tools he will use, thus building the reader's faith in his endeavour. Chapter 3 opens:

> I want to begin with theological accounts of being human that lie at the heart of the Christian tradition and develop their implications both Christologically and ecclesiologically. These accounts can be found in both the Greek and Latin Fathers, in Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, John Damascene and Maximus the Confessor as well as Augustine, Bonaventure, Aquinas and Ignatius of Loyola.[18]

Ward thus informs the reader that he will speak of theological ideas of being human, ideas that lie at the heart of the Christian tradition. In other words, what he says in this chapter is of importance to any human standing in the Christian tradition. Furthermore, the passage ensures that "the Christian tradition" in this case is more or less any Christian tradition, regardless of which church father one considers the higher authority.

Another way in which his position of authority is established in the text is by referring to great thinkers and placing himself next to them, for instance: "I am saying no more than Wittgenstein here, but unlike Wittgenstein, I want to (. . .)."[19] He calls the theologian Don Cupitt by his first name. They know each other well enough to use first names, no doubt, but to my mind this way of depicting his friendship with an established theologian of a somewhat different theological tradition than his own is a bid to strengthen his authority in the text. When speaking about Cupitt, Ward places himself next to two other renowned thinkers: "So that while Don and I differ theologically, there are shared lines of thought fundamental to both of us (and among others Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Gilles Deleuze)."[20] Later in the same chapter Ward writes: "In a sense, then, my account of the economy of response is another take on a question that dominated all Augustine's thinking: what is the relationship between the body and the soul?" In other words, Ward's notion of the *economy of response* is in a sense a contemporary counterpart of Augustine's notion of the body and the soul.[21]

Ward's way of continually referring to great thinkers is, I believe, again an expression of the Radical Orthodox approach as one that refuses to place itself in the humble corner of the larger philosophical debate,

in which most theologians after modernity have placed themselves. I find that Thomas J. J. Altizer, in his own way, is another exception to the ideal of theological humbleness and self-critique, which makes him unusual in his radical theological context (where theology is often motivated by other grounds than the purely theological). As we shall see in the particular work analysed in chapter 5, however, Altizer does not relate his thinking to the larger debate, neither humbly nor confidently. Instead, he simply proclaims his inverted Christian truth as an oracle. Ward, on the other hand, demonstrates his acquaintance with thinkers of several philosophical and theological traditions, and he also places his own thinking next to theirs. In that manner, Ward not only strengthens his own authority, but also the voice of theology in a wider sense. It is interesting, therefore, that when Ward actually performs his reading of Mark 4:24, the enormous theological confidence of the commentator voice unavoidably contradicts the humble message of the narrative that he comments on, and in that way even Ward approaches a heretical space (although from a different angle than does Altizer).

Discursive negotiations

Thus far I have indicated that Ward's *Christ and Culture* initially creates a discourse for the reader to enter. In the next step, however, I will suggest that the foundation for that very discourse is undermined by Ward's own interpretation of Mark.

Undermining authority

The outcome of Ward's analysis of Mark 4:24, in my view, questions his own commentator position. The very idea of a biblical reading that lays bare a meaning is, as we shall see, contradicted by Ward's own commentary. Or, rather, the "truth" that Ward finds in Mark is merely that of the commentary principle itself.

The New Testament verse, of which there are almost as many translations as there are Bible editions, is translated in the King James edition: "And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear

shall more be given." In the New American Standard Bible (1995) the second half of the verse, the part Ward analyses, reads: "By your standard of measure it will be measured to you; and more will be given you besides."

Ward argues that this verse should be read as "a parable of the readers of/listeners to the Gospel, who correspond to the ones who sat and listened to Jesus himself."[22] Ward suggests that: "It presents and performs the experience of circling back upon oneself, of being caught up with a repetition of what one is already familiar with."[23] It presents, in other words, a paradoxical repetition of an origin that only exists through its repetitions, and it presents this very paradox as the principle for Christian life. In Ward's view, the verse presents the gospel itself as an invitation to an economy of response—an unending reciprocality.

According to Ward's reading of Mark, the gospel itself states that it is origin-less as well as endless. There is no origin, beginning, end—or any clear aim to Mark's story. The authority, the gospel author, does not offer any answers, neither to the beginning nor the end. The author of Mark "starts" his entire gospel story no fewer than five times (Mark 1:1, 1:4, 1:7, 1:14) and finally leaves the reader with the reality of a tragedy, yet the possibility of hope—the resurrection as an open question. Subsequently, Ward's reading of 4:24 serves to show that the author of Mark is an authority who aims to undermine any traditional notion of authority. Ward underlines (and in my regard perhaps even exaggerates) the mysteriousness of the verse: "For its meaning cannot be decoded; we understand nothing specific beyond the fact that it seems to describe an apodictic law (moral? spiritual? existential?) of response, of responding. It points to, without elaborating, an economy of response"[24]

This "primary narrative," then, in Ward's reading, says itself that it holds no truth, there is nothing to be unveiled except the lack of origin, the lack of authority and truth as such. Ward's exegesis of Mark presents a gospel that remains within the discursive framework of the narrative, yet acknowledges the indeterminacy of time and authority, beginning and author, within this framework. There is no origin or telos, there is only a recurrent event of beginning, a repetition of the origin—an event that restructures time rather than being structured out of linear time.

The disciples *then* and the disciples *now,* the listeners and the readers of Mark, are invited to enter the discourse that the narrative provides. They (we, the readers) are asked to assimilate into its inner economy.

In consequence, there is a tension between the freedom of open-endedness—the ridding of certainties—on the one hand, and the complete internalization of the narrative, on the other.[25] Ward acknowledges this tension. Furthermore, he makes this very tension, this in-between of unrest into the desirable place for discipleship. Ward writes: "All discipleship is readership—the participation in the reading and rereading of this one man's representative life and work and teaching as it is narrated. All serious reading engages in an economy of response, and as such it is a liturgy, a prayer, sacramental."[26] Using a Foucauldian tongue one could say, then (which will hardly surprise anyone), that a true disciple willingly enters and stays within the Christian discourse. Speaking with Foucault, one might more specifically also say, however, that Ward embraces the very discourse which Foucault describes as regulated by the *commentary* and even that Ward encourages every disciple of God to let him or herself be incorporated into this discourse.

In Ward's account, there are no Christian truths apart from the very discourse as such. Ward's equation of Christian truth and Christian discourse are noted by other readers of Ward aswell. When discussing another text by Ward, Carl A. Raschke notes that "the narrative of the risen Savior which in conventional 'orthodoxy' might be rendered as the complete, historical outworking of the Tridentine *ousia* now becomes the fullness of discursivity"[27] In Raschke's view, Ward turns the narrative of Jesus away from traditional orthodox account of "being" into discourse. To live as a Christian is, in Ward's regard, to live a life absorbed and marinated in the dynamics of the Christian discourse as it is formed around its primary narrative about Jesus Christ. To enter the economy of response is to embrace the repetition of the original event, yet circle around the un-representable, the repetition of the primary narrative through commentaries.

According to Foucault, participating in a discourse's economy in this manner also means to ensure its perseverance through repetition. Since the origin, the primary narrative as such, never can be *finally* repeated or pinpointed down, furthermore, there will never be an end

through a final revelation. The Christian story, in this account, will never end. It will be with us until the end of time, simply because self-perseverance is part of its very structure. Or, as Ward states:

There is no 'end,' no final release from the rhythm of the narrative. The book cannot be closed and put away as if the telling of the tale has finished. We, like the disciples and contemporary representations of discipleship, return to Galilee to learn again, to reinterpret. We, like the disciples remain caught within the nets of the Christian story.[28]

Radically orthodox

So it seems that Ward discovers in the gospel of Mark the same regulative mechanism as the one discussed by Foucault through his notion of the commentary. Ward's reading of Mark expresses the notion that whenever the Bible is read, it "must—and the paradox is ever-changing yet inescapable—say, for the first time, what has already been said, and repeat tirelessly what was, nevertheless, never said."[29] At least this is the case if the Bible is to remain in any sense sacred. In an almost Foucaldian way, Ward describes this Christian life, the circling within the narrative:

And so they [the disciples] must recognise that, in being part of this new narrative they are not just fishers (. . .), they are fish (. . .) caught by Christ in the nets of a narrative within which he too has been and is being and will be caught, by God the Father, the unrepresentable origin of the *arche,* the Sender, the Giver.[30]

(Note the parallel in Ward's reading of Barth: "Barth as a writer, and we as readers, are caught in the webs of different forms of representation in which rhetoric chases the immediacy of truth"[31]) According to Ward, then, being a Christian is illustrated by the image of a fish in a net, a net in which even Christ is caught. The net is the narrative that emanates from its unrepresentable origin, an origin that is forever present and absent simultaneously. This is the reason it can neither be finished with, nor fully appreciated and understood.

This vision of a Christian life is, of course, not at all in accordance with contemporary standard-ideals, according to which individual freedom is generally held high. Thus, it makes the Christian life stand

forth as a dissidently anachronistic choice of life path. The fact that Ward does *not* acknowledge the predicament of this image—of its enclosure and even submission—is, I believe, an expression of Ward's theological bravery and wit. In a time when freedom and individual choice are hallowed, elevating a life *caught in a net* is most certainly a consciously provocative move, and one feature that makes his theology *radically* orthodox. It is a sophisticated move towards a "new" Christian orthodoxy, an orthodoxy that challenges not only the basics of liberalism but the entire tradition of critical theory since it urges a positive acceptance of the presupposition for its critique. In short, it advocates acceptance of the order of the discourse. In the choice between criticism and commentary, Ward chooses the latter. Possibly because in the choice between the human and the divine, the latter is more likely to secure the endless absence (or presence/absence, to speak with Derrida) of its final authority. In that manner, his orthodoxy is also truly radical in an all-too-human society.

In my view, Foucault's words for describing the commentary principle actually articulates Ward's notion of the Christian's relation to the Bible. The only difference, but a crucial one, is that to Ward, this circling within the narrative is a good thing, while to Foucault it is stifling and calls for an escape. The enigmatic storytelling in Mark's gospel, according to Ward, demands devotion and faith. It demands loyalty to the narrative and to the ongoing reading of that narrative. It is a gospel that demands submission precisely *because* there are no clear answers or obvious interpretations, and this, I believe, is an acceptance of the ever-circling uncertainty that could be described as a kind of "postmodern vigilance."

Postmodern vigilance

The Christian ideal of vigilance is expressed in well-known biblical passages like 1 Thess. 5:2–6 and Matt. 24:42–24:

> Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he

> would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.[32]

In these biblical passages the ideal of watchfulness and vigilance is of course directed towards the second coming of Christ. The parousia—as an actual event in time—is the *object* in these appeals for watchfulness. Ward, however, has accepted the postmodern absence of a final epistemological foundation and recasts the notion of vigilance accordingly so that it fits both the epistemological demands of poststructural theory and the Christian ideal of obedience. In fact, he did not have to recast it very much. He merely places the postmodern repetitious questioning of the given within the Christian narrative.

According to Ward, Christian representation is characterized by "an eschatological promise that keeps us continually expecting a revelation and resolution that never can be presented."[33] Therefore "we are commanded to watch, to be awake, and to distinguish what are true signs from what are false," and this watchfulness in relation to an ever absent present is what grounds the economy of faith.[34]

So it seems, via the break with foundationalism, the Christian virtue of vigilance here turns into epistemology. It becomes an end in itself with no explicit object. In other words, I find that Ward's Christology indicates a movement where the traditional Christian ideal of vigilance has gone via the postmodern and poststructural critique of identity, subjectivity and origin, back into Christian systematic theology. In Ward's account, informed by his reading of poststructuralist philosophy, the old Christian vigilance and watchfulness serve to ensure that the Christian's notion of God, Christ or Scripture does *not* turn into what Caputo perhaps described through his notion of the "fixed centre": that is, into Being, Subject or dogmatic Truth. Because the very absence of revelation and resolution, Ward argues, is the precondition for *representation*. The fact that the object, the final revelation, is ever absent is what enables Christian representation, and thus an eternal economy of response.

In a sense, then, Ward detects in Mark a reversal of the traditional Christian account of vigilance. Or rather, it is a vigilance that no longer

aims at its object, but that aims to ensure itself—a vigilance that secures a life of constant vigilance as a life of faith in response:

The narrative performs the riddle of Christology and representation that involves the reader/listener, that forces the reader/listener to be alert and watchful. It is a watchfulness and alertness that has to move towards the edge of madness and paranoia, crisis, the cross and death in order that faith may arise.[35]

Ward understands the recurring demand of conversion (*metanoia*) in Mark as a request for an *epistemology of metanoia*—an epistemology of constant vigilance, of constant betrayal of the idea of an accessible truth or a fixed knowledge; in Ward's words, "*noeo* is transformed into *metanoia*."[36] (*Knowing* is transformed into *conversion*.) Ward writes: "It is not so much a way of life Jesus is teaching (. . .) Jesus teaches a way of thinking and perceiving, a *meta-noia,* a way of reading and understanding (or living without possession of full understanding)."[37]

Subsequently, to follow God is, in Ward's account, to submit oneself to constant vigilance within the Christian narrative. It is to accept a life of incessant betrayal of anything that presents itself as an ultimate answer or dogmatic Truth: "The parables are forms of testing, or temptation, that draw the reader/listener away from the towns, the familiarity and into the wilderness, the storms at sea, the place in-between and under-defined."[38]

Ward's way of arguing here echoes his earlier work on Karl Barth and Jacques Derrida. In *Barth, Derrida and the Language of Theology* Ward wrote that to Barth: "There is no end to this supplementarity [*Folge*] because we only ever have to do with the aftermath of a truth. We handle not revelation but the memory of revelation."[39] Ward continues by arguing that: "Theological discourse, for Barth, in fact theology for Barth, takes place as a continual negotiation and renegotiation of a problematic that cannot be, cannot be allowed to be, resolved. The fact that it remains unsolved, unanswered and illogical is the very point"[40] Ward reads Barth through Derrida, which makes Ward underline the aftermath of truth, not the truth as such. The truth as such is, if anything, an illusion, materialized only through the memory, the trace. Still, to Ward the "the memory *of revelation*" rather than the memory or trace *as such,* remains the framework in which the Christian life

is lived (which, in turn, is an expression of Ward's critique of Derrida noted in chapter 1).

In *Christ and Culture,* therefore, it can be said that Ward has enacted what is anticipated already in his *Barth, Derrida and the Language of Theology:* that is, sharing with Barth the "ultimate concern" of moving "on from a theology of Scriptural discourse to a theology of discourse itself."[41]

Two voices

I indicated above that the asymmetry in Ward's Christology could open onto a post-representational account of his endeavour. In the following I shall explore this notion.

Transgression

Let us recall Foucault's discussion of *criticism* and *commentary.* Foucault's point in bringing these two traditions to light is mainly to ask for a lacking third alternative. In the choice between God and man, both based on a logic of representation, Foucault prefers neither. Instead, in an article published three years before *The Order of Things,* he proposes *transgression.* While Foucault's notion of transgression relates closely to his reading of George Bataille, not directly to the reasoning in *the Discourse on Language,* I nevertheless find this notion relevant in relation to Ward.

Foucault wrote "A Preface to Transgression" on Bataille's novel, *The Story of the Eye* (1928).[42] One of its explicit aims is to take up Bataille's project of using the concept of transgression as a foundation for philosophy.[43] In order to try to reach beyond dialectical and representational logic, Foucault proposes a philosophy of *transgression.*

Bataille's novel truly is a "story of the eye"—just as the title reveals—in which the eye is a recurring image used in many intricate ways. One of the eye-images that Foucault refers to is the eye upturned in ecstasy, which Foucault exemplifies with both sexual and spiritual ecstasy—orgasm and intense mystical prayer. This upturned eye, in Bataille's novel, is an eye that is blind, but that simultaneously represents a

moment when everything is enlightened. Only the white of the eye is exposed to a spectator. The whiteness signals clarity, Foucault writes, but it is a clarity that cannot be communicated; it is a clarity in which rational, philosophical language fails. The upturned eye represents the moment of transgression when everything is darkness, yet everything is bright; all is death, since all that remains is the death of the present, yet everything that is, is thereby simultaneously the immortality of the present.

(The eye of reflection is, I believe, well depicted in Auguste Rodin's statue *The Thinker.*) The eye of reflection represents the traditional philosophical ideal of a reflecting subject—the observing eye, becoming more and more interior, unveiling and seeing through every false appearance, until all that remains are the naked forms of truth, that is, really nothing but the idea of a reflecting subject itself. (This notion is developed by Foucault in *The Birth of the Clinic,* 1963). The upturned eye, on the other hand, indicates a philosophy free from the dynasty of representation—a philosophy of transgression. The reflecting eye is stuck in a logic of representation, and ends, just like the history of the human sciences, with an introspective subject. In a sense, this one image, the eye of reflection, illustrates the history of the human sciences in its entirety, while the upturned eye illustrates the possibility of breaking with this tradition.

In the article, Foucault claims that the limit is an inescapable aspect of man's being in the world. There are givens in each historical era, there are limits for thought, for knowledge and rationality, and these limits are an element of human existence. The possibility of transgressing these limits, however, is also a part of human existence, since the possibility of transgressing the limit is an inescapable aspect of the limit as such. The limit necessarily points beyond itself, Foucault writes, no matter how strong the restriction.[44] Thus, his notion of transgression remains immanent in the sense that the limit is not a transcendental.[45] It does not mark the limit beyond which we cannot go, or what we cannot reach, but is always already part of, and a function in, our immanent world. It functions, one could say, as a kind of immanent transcendent point, an immanently situated, seemingly eternal and unsurpassable limit.[46] It has the function of

the unreachable, yet it unavoidably points beyond itself and thereby indicates that it is already a part of the immanent world.

Now, as Foucault shows in his history of the human sciences, transgressions of discursive limits are occasionally made throughout the Western history of knowledge. There are *events,* emergences of new ways of thinking, new ways of understanding the world, that transgress the former limits of rationality. What these transgressions fail to embrace, however, according to Foucault, is the knowledge of transgression as such. Through the course of history, the limits for thought change, the former limits are transgressed and new ones replace the old—just as *man* replaced *God*—but the very idea of the limit as final, rather than transgressable, still stands. Foucault's notion of transgression, then, entails neither God nor man, but it does entail the notion of immanent points of transcendence and the immanent possibility of transgression.

Ward's Christology expressively aims to destabilize the notion of an accessible origin and final point of view. It aims at a *metanoia* of constant conversion. It does not entail or acknowledge, however, the possibility of transcending the authoritative narrative. Naturally, this is not what Ward is after. Ward does not want to leave the Christian story behind but to reinsert it in the postmodern world. The Christian narrative serves, in that sense, as a final and unsurpassable limit for Ward since he does not want to end up in what he regards as Derridean nihilism. On the other hand, however, Ward's way of establishing himself as commentator and authority—by relating himself closely to other great historical thinkers, for instance, and taking on the task of correcting theological thought from the nineteenth century onwards, and using the first name of a renowned contemporary theologian, as depicted above—introduces another and seemingly unintentional "transcendent point." On the one hand, Ward says there is no way out of the narrative; even God and the author of the gospel of Mark have withdrawn from final authority. On the other hand, his text creates an author subject somehow placed above the narrative. The *metanoia* is circumscribed by a "limit," a kind of text-immanent transcendence, and that is the confident author subject. To some extent, I believe that Ward's own voice quite unintentionally and unwittingly has a "God

function" in his own postmodern Christian narrative simply because it has taken the authoritative position for spiritual guidance that he himself says does not exist as anything but reciprocality and trace.

In this regard, Ward's text creates two contradictory "voices" that speak simultaneously. First, it creates a "transcendent" voice of authority that speaks as if it holds a position outside the pages. This first voice is the one that promises to lead the reader through thorny ancient passages and intricate contemporary philosophical texts. The second voice, however, undermines the first by saying that there is no origin and no end; there are only the traces of a beginning and a narrative into which one may enter. The second voice also says that there is no way out of the narrative; it claims that constant conversion, the *metanoia* (what I have called "postmodern vigilance") is all there is. This message, however, is contradicted by the first voice, which seems to have done the impossible and placed itself in a position outside the narrative—a position that, according to the other voice, does not exist.

In this manner, the first voice's presence in the text somehow tells us that theological speech is *necessary* and *possible*. Yet it says so next to that other voice speaking of the *metanoia,* which in turn undermines the possibility of the first voice's speech as anything but an illusion created through performance and repetition. According to the second voice, theological speech is finally *impossible* since exchange is all there is. The second voice does away with the subject position: it speaks from within the discourse, unable to leave it. Yet again, this second voice, with its message of enclosure in a narrative without end, is undermined by the first voice, which indicates a way out.

In this manner, Ward's Christology in *Christ and Culture* achieves what Ward asks for in his *Barth, Derrida and the Language of Theology,* in which he reads Barth through Derrida: that is, theology's truth is "the necessity yet impossibility of rendering an account."[47] This leads Ward to end this book with the Derridean question of *how not to speak*.[48] "Faith describes what cannot be described, represents a representation that cannot be represented."[49] In my view, the two voices of *Christ and Culture* express this impossible necessity of theological speech, but perhaps not only in the way Ward intended.

Derrida versus Foucault

In what sense can the notion of theology as necessary yet impossible be understood through a post-representational account as opposed to Ward's own notion of deferred representation? The last step in this experimental encounter between Ward and Foucault entails a reflection on the difference between Ward's *representational* starting point, based of his readings of Derrida, and Foucault's *post-representational* outset.

Deferred representation

To read Ward through Foucault rather than Derrida is evidently to read Ward against the grain. Now, by relating Ward to Foucault more directly, I hope to throw light on some of the implications of a post-representational account of theology in a Deleuzian/Foucauldian sense as contrasted with Ward's Derrida-inspired account of theology as *deferred representation.*

As already observed, Ward does not want to leave behind the logic of representation and the analogical tradition; he merely wishes to understand representation and analogy radically differently. His account of Christian representation is introduced in his earlier book, *Barth, Derrida and the Language of Theology.* Although his theology has developed considerably in the ten years that passed between these publications, I believe it is nevertheless fair to say that the earlier book provides a kind of theoretical foundation for Ward's thinking.

In *Barth, Derrida and the Language of Theology,* Ward introduces representation understood as an uncertain in-between. He keeps the notion of representation, but , understands it as a constant deferral of meaning by introducing an indeterminate representation as an in-between of meaning, an in-between in which one dwells as a Christian. To Ward, as mentioned in chapter 1, representation is substitution to the extent that it emphasizes the *absence* of the real object.[50] Christian faith is situated in-between the memory of a presence and a hope of an eschatological promise.

In Foucault's account, however, to dwell in this constant in-between, where the present is never actual and the truth never at hand, is to

dwell in the logic of the commentary principle as such. It is to dwell in the Christian discourse as a discourse of representation. Which, in turn, is exactly what the earlier Ward is after. According to Ward, "'*Repräsentieren*' is the movement of discourse itself—discourse aware of its nature as circulating the repetition and memory of a promise that was its origin."[51] To Ward, representation *is the discourse as such,* since it is a repetition of a present/absent origin which, in turn, is what bases the Christian promise, or memory of a promise. Through his Derridean reading of Barth, Ward states: "Theology (as dogmatics) is not proclamation, it reflects upon proclamation and presents [*darstellt*] 'investigation and polemic, criticism and correction.'"[52] To Ward, theology is not about assertions and truth claims, but about reflecting on the Christian truths. Ward's reasoning, through Barth, indicates that "proclamation" would never keep the discourse alive and intact, since such plain repetition of the givens would kill all the creativity and relevance of this discourse.

Foucault would most probably agree. Contrary to Ward, however, Foucault would find that the fact that statements and proclamations finally render a discourse irrelevant is precisely what gives the discourse its dynamic. It is what opens an escape from the current discourse, the current truth, which is precisely what Foucault, as opposed to Ward, is looking for. In Foucault's account, the repetition of the givens could erode the common ground, and thus open for transgression of the current discursive limits: the current relevance and meaning.

Ward writes: "The nature of theological discourse is, therefore, inseparable from the doctrine of Christ."[53] Faith in the death and resurrection of Christ, the son of God, is inseparable from theological discourse. In other words, to Ward, theological discourse unavoidably is, and will remain, the discourse in which Christ is with us always. In Ward's regard, furthermore, discourse itself is an unending process of analogy. "Discourse itself [. . .] is the interminable process of the *analogia fidei,*" Ward states.[54] In accordance with Foucault, however, even such an elaborated account of analogical representation as Ward's still remains caught within the choice between commentary and critique, hence Foucault also critiques certain uses of Derrida.

What is writing?

Foucault's article *What Is an Author?* famously questions the notion of *the author* and thus the account of literature as such. He reaches beyond the obsession with the name, beyond an account of literature where the *author* notion structures and organizes the discourse. Foucault is tired of the constant elevation of the original. He wants to do away with what he regards as "the old Christian fixation" that either authenticates or rejects a text, and that constantly reveals the need for "ascertaining the holiness of [the text's] author." He is, in short, tired of the author's "divine" position.[55]

This turn by Foucault was not wholly new in 1969, when the article was first published. He argued that while the ideas he explores have been around for quite some time, the *consequences* of these ideas have not been fully explored. In his own words, he is "not certain that the consequences derived from the disappearance or death of the author have been fully explored or that the importance of this event has been appreciated." "To be specific," Foucault writes, "it seems to me that the themes destined to replace the privileged position accorded the author have merely served to arrest the possibility of genuine change."[56] That is, the author notion has merely been supplanted, which has hindered a more profound change in the account of literature.[57]

Foucault critiques the turn towards writing in itself, écriture, which was popular at the time.[58] That is, writing understood as an endless play of presence and absence. This, Foucault says, is just another substitution for the author. Another way to state this is to say that Foucault (at least implicitly) reacts against certain expressions of the Derridean approach. In Foucault's regard, the notion of writing as absence—as constant deferral—has been used to replace the notion of the author. This change of perspective offers no radical potential for change, for Foucault, since it does not move away from the thought structure according to which the author is the higher authority. Rather, "as currently employed," Foucault states, this way of moving beyond the author has "merely transposed the empirical characteristics of an author to a transcendental anonymity."[59] It has only replaced the transcendent author with another evasive transcendence: the idea of

écriture. In Foucault's view, the substitution of the original author by écriture does not break with the commentary tradition, nor with the tradition of criticism.[60] Instead, it "reinscribes the theological affirmation of its sacred origin or a critical belief in its creative nature."[61] *Writing as absence* becomes a new divinity/subjectivity.

Is not the idea of writing as absence, Foucault asks, a "transposition into transcendental terms of the religious belief in a fixed and continuous tradition(. . .)?"; that is, an idea that might "reintroduce the religious principle of hidden meanings (which require interpretation) and the critical assumption of implicit significations, silent purposes, and obscure contents (which gives rise to commentary)?"[62] Against this, Foucault suggests that the notion of writing as absence might, yet again, bring a foundation of religious mystery into the act of reading as commentary.[63]

In "What Is an Author?," Foucault speaks of écriture, and in the above I am discussing Ward's Derridean account of representation. Nonetheless, whether Foucault is right in his critique or not, his reasoning here depicts why a Foucauldian reading of Ward will end up questioning Ward's elevation of the Christian narrative and the *metanoia*.

Paraphrasing Foucault, one could say that the analysis of Ward above illuminates how Ward, through the notion of *metanoia,* manages to transpose into transcendental terms the religious belief in a fixed and continuous tradition. How so? In Ward's reasoning the *metanoia* preserves the eminence of the Christian framework, the shared Christian narrative and its discourse.[64] The *metanoia* ensures that the Christian narrative never ends. Thanks to the *metanoia,* Christian narrative can never finally be explained or put away, and this safeguards its endurance as The Narrative. Ward's *metanoia* is an uncertain in-between, and as such, a Christian transcendental. In that manner, Ward's *metanoia* preserves the eminence of the original yet infinitely unrepresentable.

This is most certainly what Ward wishes to achieve. His epistemology of *metanoia* within the Christian narrative secures the eminence of whatever announced this epistemological imperative in the first place, and this without falling into the "void and meaninglessness of the infinite presence/absence" for which Ward finally critiques Derrida. The *metanoia* evades nihilism since the narrative provides the framework,

the transposed meaning, beginning and end, for the economy of response. (In the next chapter, I will similarly depict how Ward's use of the Deleuzian concept of the "schizo" does not evade but actually strengthens the Christ of the Christian narrative.) So how, then, does a post-representational account differ?

Post-representation

In accordance with post-representational perspectives, theological truths could be considered actual and unavoidable, and in that sense "necessary," but not therefore necessarily final, hence they would be "impossible" as final truth claims. In consequence, the "necessary impossibility of theology" would be somewhat differently understood through a post-representational account. The truth of the Christian narrative would be considered actual and productive—it is actually there and it does affect our world—and so would the commentator, but they would not therefore be considered final.

In a critical reading of Ward's Christology (as it is expressed in two articles), Virginia Burrus argues that if Ward would let go of the orthodox and even radically orthodox aim, his theology could open up more fully to "others and to the otherness of the future, as well as to the past."[65] Burrus starts out in the question of orthodoxy versus unorthodoxy, orthodoxy versus heresy, and the paradoxical way in which these two depend upon each other. From this outset she questions Ward's apologetic agenda as well as Ward's critique of certain secular and feminist theology endeavours. Burrus ends by wondering why Ward chooses the dialectic path of controversy, and suggests that Ward's endeavour would be more open to "otherness" if it let go of the aspiration to orthodoxy. She believes, or at least wants to believe, that it is "possible to theologize without resort to the heresiological habit, via creative and creatively ambivalent reappropriations of a complex and diverse tradition, in dialogue (. . .) with whatever other voices may seem most helpful and relevant in a given moment." [66]

In other words, if Ward would let go of the claims to orthodoxy, he would open up to diversity in accordance with his own ambition. I agree with Burrus' conclusion, but I also find that Ward, to some degree

and perhaps accidently, has already left his Radical Orthodoxy behind and opened up to otherness beyond his enclosed Christian narrative. Ward's Christology already points beyond the Christian narrative and thus beyond the orthodoxy it produces.

My reading has suggested there is a kind of "necessary impossibility" in the ambiguous voices of Ward's theology. I have tried to explore, in line with a post-representational perspective, whether there are actual presences in Ward's text that produce and create truths beyond or beneath the author's intention. In other words, whether there is a sense in which the text lives a life of its own. I argued that in Ward's *Christ and Culture,* the commentator voice that is present in the text—as a kind of "text immanent transcendence"—depicts a way out of the *metanoia* and out of the primary narrative. In other words, Ward himself accidently appears as a phantasm, as a transgressable limit, that indicates a way out of his own theology. Thus understood, the Radical Orthodox voice of Ward safeguards the illogical aspect of faith and theology: theology as necessary, even unavoidable, yet impossible thus to some extent always creatively nonsensical and playful.

In Ward's reading, the author of Mark makes sure to break down any authority and leave only a relational pattern—conversion, readership and listening—where the disciple is to dwell infinitely. This, however, made Ward, the commentator himself, appear rather phantasmic. If not even the author of Mark could leave the narrative and guide his readers from an outer point of view, how could Ward? Ward the commentator was simply undermined by his own commentary. This made the commentator position as well as his commentary rather unstable. Instead of pointing towards a proper understanding of Mark, these two together, the commentator and his commentary, formed an ambiguous couple: a self-undermining voice on an infinite loop saying that perhaps there are no final authorities, nor final narratives.

4

Deleuze beyond inclusion and exclusion

In this chapter, I suggest that Christian theology, when related to Deleuzian thought, has a tendency to preserve rather than subvert the thought structure of which the post-representational account initially was intended as a critique.[1]

According to Deleuze, this somewhat annoying fact would fit neatly into his overall critical image of the theological thought tradition. In his view, theology is—though not entirely so, as we saw in chapter 2—an area of thought where the logic of representation is especially dominant. Theology is a discourse of representation and thus an area of thought in which, not astonishingly perhaps, the transcendent God keeps resurrecting. The present chapter will try to show, in relation to this, on the one hand, that Christ remains the representation of the one exclusive Christ even when Christ is theorized as "schizo-Christ," by way of direct inspiration from Deleuze; while, on the other hand, a Deleuzian "theology of becoming" may merely instigate an enclosed and all-encompassing divinity that in the end leaves no escape for actual difference.

This may come as no surprise; still, why does the use of Deleuzian thought in theology not radically shake up the theological thought structure? Why does even "Deleuzian theology" think difference either through exclusivism (where difference is merely exception) or inclusivism (where actual difference is finally unthinkable)? More important, furthermore, can it be any other way? In order to explore these questions I turn to an article on Deleuze written by Foucault. In the article, Foucault indirectly discusses the problem of exclusivism versus inclusivism that may occur when post-representation meets

theology. Moreover, he sketches a way forward that turns metaphysics into a "phantasmaphysics." This, I believe, could be a way of theological relevance.

Deleuze in theology

The first part of this chapter briefly introduces two theological attempts inspired by Deleuze. Through these examples I will discuss the effect, or lack of effect, of these theological endeavours with regard to the overarching theological thought structure.

Deleuze in Ward and Keller

Graham Ward and the North American theologian Catherine Keller both make use of Deleuzian thought in theology. While Ward is a Radical Orthodox theologian, Catherine Keller is one the critics of Radical Orthodoxy who leans towards the immanent or radical theological trajectory associated with Altizer and others. Whereas Ward aims to reintroduce a common ground for theology, Keller aims to do the opposite: to let theology begin in sheer chaos.

Keller holds that Radical Orthodoxy's strivings to reclaim Christian truth in postmodernity may ground a new Christian exclusivism, which, in turn, may be used to ignore the profound complexity and suffering of life on earth. Ward, however, does not strive to reproduce a simple notion of the Christian truth, as his use of Derrida indicates. Rather, he presents the Christian life as a life devoted to an unsolvable riddle. Keller and Ward, then, hold radically different positions in the contemporary theological landscape, and yet share common motives for using Deleuze in their respective theologies. When using the Deleuzian body of thought, they both aim—in vastly different ways—to open theological doctrines to the complexity of bodily, earthly life.

Ward draws on the notion of the "schizo" in Deleuze and Felix Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* (1972). In *Anti-Oedipus*—a fascinating work co-written by Deleuze and the psychoanalyst Guattari—"the schizophrenic" is introduced as a radical, revolutionary nomad who resists all forms of oppressive power, including religious power. The schizophrenic in

Anti-Oedipus is a direct affront to Freud's psychoanalytic system since she or he has not developed an ego or gone through the Oedipal process of individuation. A schizo politics would thus, as Mark Seem writes in the introduction to the English translation, "escape coding, scramble the codes, and flee in all directions."[2] Schizos are not obsessed with analysing their parent-relations, nor restricted by religious or political power directed at the self.[3] They are free, and constitute an existent escape from modern Western thought and politics.

Ward introduces a "schizoid Christology" in his *Christ and Culture,* inspired by the "schizo" in Deleuze and Guattari. Through the schizo, Ward understands Christ based on "Christic" *operation* rather than on *dogmatic* Christology. He aims to radically relocate the characteristics of Christ from that of the eternal and stable to a Christ founded in, and only in, an economy of response: a relational motion. By quoting Deleuze and Guattari, Ward presents the Christ as one "continually wandering about, migrating here, there, and everywhere as best he can, he plunges further into the realm of deterritorialisation, reaching the furthest limits of the decomposition of the socius on the surface of his own body without organs."[4]

Christ is depicted as a nomad, a drifter who "de-territorializes" the land rather than marking out a territory for himself and his followers. He is a wanderer who has no "organized body" wherein each part has its *proper* function in accordance with categorizations of particular organic bodily functions, all relating to an organic bodily whole. Instead, he is a *body without organs:* a body that functions and expresses itself creatively and beyond expectation.

This image of Christ causes a reversal of ideals, offering a new spin on Christological signification and representation. For most, I believe, it is a radically new image of Christ. But is it a distortion of the logic of representation as such? Or is it just a new way of explaining what/how the "true Christ" really is, rather than a way to question the representational idea of Christian truth as such?

To me it seems the Christological thought tradition does not allow for the making of a schizo out of Christ. Instead, the schizo becomes the Christ. When Christ is called a schizo, suddenly, at least to my mind, the schizo (who appears as such an exceptionally new expression of

theoretical and political resistance in *Anti-Oedipus*) becomes an image of the biblical Jesus wandering aimlessly about Palestine in his worn sandals, and an image of the contemporaneous Christ who plunges into our lives today, each time in a different appearance. Instead of breaking with representation, this image itself becomes a representation of Christ, thus excluding any expression that is not represented in this new image of the Son of Man.[5] Why is that?

One could argue that Ward knows his Derrida better than his Deleuze or, naturally, that he does not want to take the full consequences of the Deleuzian critique of representation, since his theology aims to reintroduce a common ground for Christian faith. Still, might there not be a more profound reason for the mechanisms at work when Deleuze meets theology?

As it happens, a similar effect occurs in the theology of Catherine Keller, who stands far from Ward. Keller's *The Face of the Deep* (2003) questions the idea of the Christian "origin" on basis of the "beginning," the *bereshit* of the Hebrew myth of creation.[6] Early in its history, Christianity established as an unquestionable truth that God created the world out of nothing, *ex nihilo,* despite the literal wording of the opening verses of Genesis, in which God creates the world out of *tehom* (the Hebrew word in Gen. 1:1 often translated as "the deep," "the abyss"). Instead of keeping the tehomic backdrop—what Keller calls the *beginning*—Keller states that the Christian tradition made sure to cut free from the "abysses" of the past in order to invent the idea of a pure, blank *origin*.[7] Thus, she aims to reintroduce a chaotic complexity into theological discourse by proposing (beyond a simple substitution of "origin" for "beginning") a "tehomic" theology or a "theology of becoming." In other words, she searches for a theological language in which the chaotic reality of our concrete lives foregoes ideas of organisation and fixed being.

Rather than simply to borrow a Deleuzian term and apply it in theology, as does Ward, Keller actually follows Deleuze's example. She does not recycle already invented concepts but starts creating concepts herself, in line with Deleuze and Guattari's notion in *What Is Philosophy?*[8] In that sense, her endeavour is more likely to succeed in staying true to Deleuze's intent than is Ward's.

Nevertheless, just as in the case of the schizoid Christ in Ward, it is very likely that the reader of her "tehomic theology" will see nothing more in this chaosmos than a new image of the one eternal God, only now with slightly altered ideals. The traditional Christian God, whom we have come to know as one who creates *ex nihilo* (and who, we might imagine, would prefer a neat work desk to the chaos of books and papers that surrounds me now), is replaced by another representation of the true God: an inclusive God who loves the human chaos we so often find ourselves in—and in ourselves. The old order-loving God is simply replaced by one who embraces chaos and disorder. While this image of God suits me and my experience of the world as a rather chaotic place just fine, I cannot help but wonder if it is not still haunted by the oppressive logic from which it aims to break free.

This new image of the Christian beginning functions just like the old one. The difference is just that the traditional notion of origin *ex nihilo* is excluded. To put it differently, the traditional notion of *ex nihilo* is included in and subsumed under "becoming," which now is the ever-changing river of life. In Keller's work, becoming then comes to the fore as an all-encompassing divine flow of change that embraces every expression of life, and excludes no one, not even those who want to differ. When becoming is placed within the Christian narrative and thus divinized, it easily ends up (despite Keller's intent) in what Philip Goodchild regards as a misapprehension of Deleuze that "holds up movement, change, chance, difference, flight and nomadism as unchanging values."[9] Instead of breaking with foundationalism, the flow of change becomes a new foundation.

I refer merely to one part of a single book of Keller's rich production, which of course does not do her justice. Keller herself addresses this problem elsewhere and states that the play of difference may find itself in a "new kind of closure, enmeshed in network, however fluidly enunciated." In fact, the risk of a new enclosure is what makes her turn to Deleuze and Whitehead in the first place rather than to "a relativism that freezes into a deconstructive undecidability."[10]

Yet, if one follows the Deleuzian and Foucauldian critique of Christian thinking, it might not be her own endeavour that causes this effect but the very fact that she is doing theology. The representational

thought structure in which God somehow unavoidably precedes the *tehom* is in the end ever-present as the only viable option. When her argumentation takes its outset in the myth of creation—the Christian narrative itself—the God figure and even the notion of theology as such positions "the tehom," which then becomes a mere attribute.

The wider question here is not whether Keller or Ward manage to properly implement Deleuzian thought. The question is rather about the repressive discursive mechanisms that are activated when Deleuzian thought is drawn into theology.

Why does the "tehomic theology" of Keller introduce a chaotic yet still safely Christian God in the *tehom;* and why does the "schizoid Christ" of Ward introduce an altered yet fully recognizable Christ—instead of discovering a schizo in the Christ figure? Why does the representation of the Christian God still stand strong? Is it due to the theological thought tradition, to pious expectations, or is it due to some Christian residuals even in Deleuze's thought?[11]

I believe these two examples of theological application of Deleuze show that the liberating critique of one Christian expression easily leads to a new repressive statement on what Christianity is all about. The critique ends in a verdict about the truth, the exterior reality that Christianity finally *represents*. Both Keller and Ward want to make room for the complexity of life in the midst of Christian doctrine, but their endeavours show that this complex reality is easily overshadowed by a new truth. Moreover, this new truth might be even harder to break with since it gives itself out as articulating the complexity of reality.

These problems are actually indirectly treated by Foucault. In the following I will look into the article written by Foucault on Deleuze, "Theatrum Philosophicum," in order to throw light on the theological dilemmas described.

Beyond inclusivism and exclusivism

In his famous article on Deleuze, "Theatrum Philosophicum," Foucault discusses the predicament that, in different ways, occupies Keller and Ward. He discusses the predicament of how not to let habitual thought structures keep reintroducing the idea of a one true account of reality,

thus obscuring or overlooking the multiplicity and potentiality of life.[12] He also sketches a way forward from this dilemma.

Escape the domination of identity

Foucault describes the philosophical problem of making room for diversity as a problem of how to allow difference to escape the "domination of identity." Foucault writes:

> The univocity of being, its singleness of expression, is paradoxically the principal condition which permits difference to escape the domination of identity, which frees it from the law of the Same as a simple opposition within conceptual elements.[13]

Foucault—writing almost in a state of intoxication after having read Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition* and his *Logic of Sense*—agrees with Deleuze's thesis that the "univocity of being" is what finally truly allows for diversity and for the unexpected. Foucault's essay is one of the first attempts to portray and discuss Deleuzian thought, and one of the most cited. It is here that one finds the famous, multilayered suggestion: "and perhaps one day, this century will be known as Deleuzian."[14] It is multilayered since since every master concept (like the notion of "Deleuzian" as such) indicates a multiplicity, it multiplies potentialities. Thought is not theory, it is practice. That is, theory is not a translation of practice into words, not what applies to practice but is itself a practice among others; thus, totalization disperses and thought becomes possible as practice, as thinking.[15] "Deleuzian" in this proposition does not signify a new master thinker but indicates that "thought is again possible."

Consequentially, in order to preserve the rights of differences to escape the domination of identity, Foucault enhances the Deleuzian univocal being. Being is thus understood as "that which is always said of difference."[16]

Foucault starts his portrayal of Deleuzian thought with Deleuze's reading of Plato (which I also introduced in chapter 2). If the history of Christian theology could be described as thinking after Christ, then the history of philosophy could very well be described as thinking after Plato. Through Deleuze, however, Foucault discovers that the history

of philosophy actually is a series of "anti-Platonic" discourses.[17] Every philosophical discourse after Plato can be viewed as a deviation from its "excessive and deficient father."[18] They all pay tribute to Plato by dealing with his inheritance in one way or another, but the philosophical creativity set loose by Plato has eventuated out of repeated experience of the unsatisfactoriness of his thought. Foucault describes Deleuze's own contribution to the series of anti-Platonic thought as a reversal—and finally a *perversion*—of Platonism since it sacrilegiously searches out "the dirty leftovers," all those things that "were never hallowed by an idea."[19]

How so? Foucault notes that internal to Platonism—in Plato's establishment of the forms, the ideas—Deleuze discovers a creative force, an ongoing act of division.[20] In the very same move, which is often considered the very foundation for thinking Identity and Truth, Deleuze discovers an opposite force. In Plato's search for the true essences among all the appearances in the world, the true ideas as opposed to the simulacra, Deleuze enhances the very *division* as a creative act. In the moment of choice, right before the division is set, everything is still up for grabs. In that moment, the simulacra and the essences—as well as the appearances and the Ideas—are equally real, equally actual. This moment of indecision, then, precedes Truth and Identity and expresses the infinite potential of univocal being.

Deleuze's account reverses Platonism, Foucault holds, so that *the power* of division, the categorization that separates this from that—the Model and the Copy from the Simulacra—becomes the *force* of diversity. (*Power* is here used for the French *pouvoir,* with its connotations of not only potential but also of oppression; whereas *force* is used for the French *puissance,* which also has the double connotation of construction and destruction, yet which does not allude to official or political power, but rather to power from within, below or perhaps even from unspoken sources.) Even though the Platonic ideas became settled with Aristotle, then found an entire logic of representation through Christian orthodoxy, as described in chapter 2, the event of division is not a past event. To the contrary, the act of division is integral to every account of truth versus falsehood, in every here and now. The very repetition of these distinctions indicates a preceding multiplicity. The

repetition of the forms indicates the creative act of division as a creative act that effaces both the distinction and the connection between essence and simulacra.

Not to name

Having read Deleuze, Foucault's scepticism towards posing new statements as a way to break down old truths is confirmed. There is no use in "reinstating the rights of appearances" by giving them "conceptual backbones" and "solidity and meaning," he says.[21] Those expressions or "appearences"—or even "timid creatures," to speak with Foucault—that do not quite fit in with what we regard to be real, sensible, plausible or at all comprehensible should be respectfully left outside of our attempts to conceptualize. The reason is that the kind of uncertainties that exist among us before they are named, articulated and categorized, is what fundamentally enables the openness to the unknown and the unexpected. According to Foucault, "unleashed simulacra," the copy becoming the platonic original, is what enables an openness to the other and to the *event*.

In other words, one should not consent to the structure *eventuating out of* the act of division in Plato and provide every shy appearance with a name and place. Lending "appearances conceptual backbones" in this sense—out of a honourable intention to provide a neglected phenomenon with the status of essences—merely supports the structure that once put these "timid creatures" out in the cold. It is of course sometimes vital, as Spivak underlines, to reclaim for neglected phenomena the status of a name and place in order to give it political, philosophical or theological power.[22] In Foucault's view, however, this may not be what makes any difference in the long run. In fact, it might just preserve the solid thought structure that one aims to break down.

In my view, the use of Deleuzian concepts in the theological examples of Keller and Ward well illustrates Foucault's point. Keller's and Ward's "failed" attempts illustrate the risk embedded in naming and conceptualizing that which differs, that which does not yet fit in. They show that when difference is conceptualized it tends to turn identical. Difference becomes a *power* of division rather than a *force*

of diversity. When "the schizoid" or "the chaotic" is named, it tends to be brought right back into the categorizations and representations of the already known and familiar. The very conceptualizations in Ward and Keller unintentionally gave the elements discussed exactly the kind of systematic stability and identity that the writers were trying to free theology from. Giving name to the "fragmentary, intermingled or monstrously confused elements" (Foucault's words above) internal to traditional theology somehow made these elements lose their confusion and made them safely and familiarly Christian.

The recurrence of difference

Foucault stresses this point even further by discussing the terms of "becoming" and "return" that Deleuze uses to describe univocal being, the being of difference.[23] In Foucault's regard, these concepts, "becoming" and "return," are too easily misunderstood. They risk glossing over the importance and the force of the unthought and the unspoken. Moreover, this neglect might lead right back into the choice between an all-encompassing inclusivism versus an exclusive repetition of the One.

"Becoming," Foucault argues, "might be somewhat slack, but it nevertheless maintains a unity—not only and not especially that of an infinite container, but also the unity of fragments, of passing and recurring moments, and of floating consciousness where it achieves recognition."[24] "Return," on the contrary, indicates a circle, a circular movement with a centre, where events occur on its periphery. In other words, one might understand *becoming* as an infinite container of all sorts, an index of chaotic differences, all blessed and embraced—a colourful, unending weave. While *return* might be understood as a "once and for all"—the one stable truth that will return no matter the course of history, and regardless of peripheral events.

Foucault's concerns may be related to similar theological accounts. Foucault does not discuss such relations in the article, but I find that the parallel makes his article highly relevant for theology. The notion of "return" easily falls back on the Christ event as the one event that returns through history. The Christ event is understood as an event that appears in different guises in its reappearance through history. The difference

in appearance makes it even more important for "the commentators" of the Christian tradition to recognize it as the returning force of the One. The death and resurrection of Christ becomes a life pattern, an event that recurs on individual and collective levels throughout the history of Christianity.

Most Christian traditions underline that the Christ event remains the centre that renders any other event peripheral, but they understand this "once and for all" in many different ways.[25] The notion of the "once and for all" was, for instance, discussed and understood differently in the Roman Catholic eucharistic sacrifice as opposed to the Evangelical communion. The former considered the Christ event actually to re-occur in the sacramental act, and thereby indicated that the once-and-for-all event was elevated above human accounts of time and events. The latter, on the other hand, stressed the once-and-for-all act of redemption by suggesting that it could *not* be—did not *need* to be—repeated in time. What united these examples of Christian practice and belief, however, was that they stressed the Christ event as the one centre and truth of Christian faith.

"Becoming," on the other hand, might be connected to contemporary theological positions that *oppose* the different Classical accounts of the "once-and-for-all." Keller, for instance, argues that the once-and-for-all grounds a thinking that elevates a one pure origin at the cost of diversity. The once-and-for-all may therefore lead to an oppression of diversity. Against this background, Keller's tehomic theology of becoming rather supports an account of the divine as an ever-changing fluidity. Despite all her good intentions, however, Keller's solution does not offer any real escape from the Christological circle of representation because, if understood as an all-embracing fluidity, it does not allow for any final distinctions, which means that a real "exodus" from the fluidity (for those who do not want to be embraced by Christianity) becomes almost unthinkable.

In substitution for "becoming" and "return" Foucault suggests the notion of "recurrence": "Being is what is always said of difference; it is the *Recurrence* of difference."[26] The French wordplay here is not quite translatable into English: Foucault replaces *Retour* and *Devenir* with *Revenir,* which in English would be like replacing "return"

and "becoming" with "recoming," if there were such a word; but this replacement does not depend on wordplay as such. What is more important, these notions in French are all verbal nouns in the infinitive form ("to become," "to return," "to recur") and this is of some importance for Foucault's understanding, as we shall see below. "With this term [Recurrence]," Foucault says:

> we can avoid the use of both *Becoming* and *Return,* because differences are not the elements—not even the fragmentary, intermingled, or monstrously confused elements—of an extended evolution that carries them along in its course and occasionally allows their masked or naked reappearance.[27]

Foucault's reading enhances one aspect of Deleuzian univocal being while taking leave of two possible misuses. These misuses are those of becoming as an all-encompassing inclusivism, on the one hand, and of eternal return as a reiterative return of an exclusive event, on the other. By dismissing these readings, Foucault's reading does not consitute a turn away from Deleuzian thought; rather it enhances a certain aspect of the Deleuzian notion of repetition. It underlines the force of repetition—repetition that indicates and affirms diversity—rather than the creative flux of concepts.

Regardless of how Foucault's account of Deleuze coheres with various other readings of Deleuze, I find Foucault's emphasis relevant for theological discussions of representation.[28] I will argue that Foucault here opens a kind of "transgressive" opportunity for theology.

If we cannot speak of difference without taking away its openness to the unknown by naming it, then what should we do? Shut up? No, not necessarily. Foucault finds another escape in the Deleuzian body of thought through the notion of the phantasm.

"Phantasmaphysics"

The final section of this chapter introduces the notion of metaphysics as the discourse that deals with what comes to the fore as eternal; in other words, metaphysics understood as a discourse that deals with phantasms: "a phantasmaphysics." Possibly, this notion holds theological opportunities.

The phantasm

Before offering his account of univocal being, as surveyed above, Foucault writes on the Deleuzian notion of the *phantasm,* thus he adds yet another aspect (this time from Deleuze's *The Logic of Sense* and from their shared inspirational source, Pierre Klossowski) to the notion of the recurrence of difference.[29]

Generally, the word "phantasm" signifies what we regard as illusions, delusions or simply false ideas. For instance, to a positive atheist (like Richard Dawkins) the idea of an existent God would be such a delusion. According to this way of using the word, phantasms are similar to plain misconceptions. It is precisely this elusive and denigrating reflex in our way of thinking that makes the notion of the phantasm, as well as the simulacrum, vital to the post-representational thinkers.

Now, before I explain Foucault's reasoning on this point further, let me note that the terminology here is a bit confusing for anyone with a linguistic interest since the Greek *fántasm* is simply *simulacrum* in Latin. Moreover, Deleuze and Foucault describe these notions in many different ways, and of course there are many interpretations of their different uses (see note 227). I use *phantasms* here, however, in line with Foucault's reasoning in "Theatrum Philosophicum," according to which phantasms are described as the seemingly eternal ideas and truths. The notion of simulacrum is related to the phantasm and at times is used almost synonymously, but it carries a wider sense as well of that which foils and questions the idea of a model and a copy—or an original and a fake—simply by being a copy that does not settle for being regarded as one.

If the division internal to language and thought after Plato finally rethinks both the distinction and the connection between essence and simulacra, as was suggested by my reading of Foucault's interpretation of Deleuze, then this division also initiates a new account of the phantasm. Through the account of a disconnected yet intermingled relation between essence and simulacra, Foucault (through Deleuze) turns things around and describes *phantasms* as eternal ideas—which also, and to Foucault primarily, means that he turns phenomenology around.[30] According to such a "reversed Platonism," it will be the final

and general truths—such as the Law, the Idea or the repetition of the Same—that become phantasmic. Every Law indicates a preceding diversity, every Idea indicates a creative division and every repetition of the Same indicates the *im*possibility of any repetition other than that of an eternal return. The metaphysical ideas and conceptions that historically have come to the fore as eternal are, in short, *phantasms.*[31]

According to Foucault, this means that metaphysics becomes *the discourse that deals with phantasms.* It is the discourse that wrestles with the materiality of incorporeal things.[32] Metaphysics concentrates on the actuality, the function, the force and effects of whatever comes to the fore as given. Thus, beyond representation—beyond distinctions of being versus nonbeing—Foucault turns metaphysics into a "phantasmaphysics."[33] A phantasmic metaphysics of this kind entangles the very categories that distinguish between truth and falsehood. It therefore obliterates the notion of a more substantial truth behind the phantasm.

This does not render the phantasms irrelevant or powerless, however, but quite the opposite. Foucauldian metaphysics does not deny or reject that which comes to the fore as eternal truths, nor does it strive to get away from it. To the contrary, for Foucault the phantasms are indispensable for the very possibility of the new, of the *event.* The unexpected, the previously impossible and even the unthinkable is dependent upon the phantasm. Thus, as we shall see, when viewed as phantasms the eternal truths have a subversive function in our language and thought. They enable the previously unexpected and unthinkable to emerge.

Foucault's reading of Deleuze emphasizes the Deleuzian return to being, which is a return to metaphysics based on the presupposition of a pure immanence, a univocal being in the Scotist sense.[34] Deleuze does not really leave transcendence behind, according to Foucault, but he makes sure it is placed immanently as a function on an immanent plane. Hence, according to this Foucauldian reading, Deleuze does not—as suggested by Slavoj Žižek—create an enclosed "super-ego" deprived of transcendence, thus also deprived of the freedom to act.[35] Deleuze rather releases being by approaching phantasms as immanent expressions of transcendence. He allows for dogma to function as

phantasms, deprived of truth and essence. Or, if you will, he allows dogma to be liberated from the restrictions of truth versus falsehood, being versus nonbeing.

The science of nonexisting entities

Foucault begins and ends his essay on Deleuze with allusions to the French writer and artist Pierre Klossowski, their mutual source of inspiration. In an essay on Klossowski (to which Deleuze refers in *The Logic of Sense*[36]), Foucault writes that Klossowski has "rediscovered the marvels and depths of the simulacrum" from "the bottom of Christian experience."[37] He suggests that Klossowski's account of language as simulacrum is a rediscovery of a kind of post-representationalism embedded in Christian experience. Foucault argues that Klossowski moves language beyond the separation between sense and non-sense, signifier and signified, symbol and sign, through this rediscovery of Christianity. According to Foucault, Klossowski has left behind those "games of yesterday" (for instance, the simple separations between sense and non-sense, signifier and signified) and entered language as simulacrum. In Klossowski, language is no longer limited by these restrictive distinctions.

Deleuze, in turn, writes in relation to Klossowski that our time has discovered theology in itself, deprived of its divine sanction and presupposition. "Theology is now the science of nonexisting entities, the manner in which these entities—divine or anti-divine, Christ or Antichrist—animate language and make for it this glorious body which is divided into disjunctions."[38] In that sense, Deleuze says, it is our epoch that has discovered theology. That is to say, theology is no longer based on a belief in God but stands forth as an empty structure, as *theology* in its own right, or as a *grammar,* to speak with Nietzsche.

Nietzsche famously stated that even if God is dead, we still have grammar that structures our world.[39] In other words, we still have an overarching structure that limits thought; there is still a divine or at least transcendent pattern within which our thinking moves. According to Deleuze, however, the account of theology expressed through the work of Klossowski may in fact change this. With Klossowski, the link between

God and grammar is no longer an implied and presupposed link, but a *recognized* link and thus one that can be acted out, Deleuze says.[40] We can now use this Christian thought structure; we can move within and beyond it. If our doctrines are phantasms, then the representational structure need no longer be restrictive. In fact, it can be in and beyond itself at the same time—it can, in short, be post-representational.

The phantasm and the event

If repetition is impossible as anything but the repetition of difference, then the repetition of a phantasm—the repetition of that which comes to the fore as eternal and true—inevitably indicates what is lacking in the appearance of this phantasm: the recurrence of difference, the event. The very appearance of that which seems solid indicates the possibility of the unexpected. The recurrence of phantasms is a transgressive repetition—it points beyond the given and indicates its contingency. Through the appearance of the phantasm, the recurrence of difference appears. But how? In what concrete way is the representational structure not restrictive from a post-representational perspective?

Well, the phantasm and its relation to the event are not, to Foucault, as strange and abstract as they might seem. They are not exterior or transcendent forces, but patterns present in our language, in our very grammar. There is, for example, an asymmetry in our language, between the infinite tense and the present tense. This asymmetry is indicative of another asymmetry, a gap in our very perception of the world. In this way, the phantasms are intertwined with language per se, and there they have a function similar to the role that doctrine has played in the Christian tradition: they establish the common ground for our experience. In language, phantasms come to the fore as the most basic and general notions. According to Foucault, it is the *infinitive* form of the verb that has this general and universal form. Thus, the phantasms are the infinitives: to die, to live, to sleep, to blush, and so on.[41] (Deleuze gets the notion of the relation between the phantasm and the infinite verb from Luce Irigaray who, he says, analyzes the implications of this relation (for example, through "to live," "to absorb," "to give"). Deleuze

writes: "The phantasm is inseparable from the infinite form of the verb and bears witness thereby to the pure event."[42])

Through their existence, then, verbal infinitives ground events and thereby also indicate that events are general and face humans equally, or at least similarly. But this is not to say that they, in Foucault's account of the Deleuzian phantasm, are neither *eternal* nor *general*.

Foucault exemplifies this by relating the present tense of dying to the idea of death as such, the infinitive "to die." When someone dies, the particularity of this experience is directly and inescapably related to the idea of "death." Still, when someone is dying, to those who are losing her, her dying has nothing to do with a general idea of "death" or "to die" because it is all about the concrete fact that she dies in this particular moment. To those who are losing her now, "death" (in general) is not what it used to be, and it will probably never be the same again. From a Foucauldian perspective, the experience of the death of a beloved one breaks into the present and incarnates the present by repeating the infinitive "to die" in a momentous—yet momentarily—way that recurrently scatters the notion of a general notion of what death is all about.[43]

To put it differently, there are no eternal or general aspects of life, no events that face *every* human being similarly, since there is nothing eternal or general whatsoever in what is experienced in a moment of dying. In that moment, there is no general "death." Or rather, "death" as a general notion both appears and changes right there and then. Whatever it was before, it is now something else. And yet, this "meaning-event"—the change of meaning that occurs in the particular experience—would be completely impossible without the phantasmic notion of a general death. Foucault writes: "The grammar of the meaning-event revolves around two asymmetrical and insecure poles: the infinitive mode and the present tense. The meaning-event is always both the displacement of the present and the eternal repetition of the infinitive."[44]

This dynamic is not merely active in such a limit phenomenon as death, in Foucault's view, but just as well in, say, the infinitive of "to read," "to dance," "to give birth" (or, as above, "to become," "to return," "to recur"), or in a political phenomenon, such as "to revolt."

It enables the concrete experience to break with the idea of a general experience and subsequently to open onto an entirely new account of "the revolution" on an individual as well as a collective level.

In 2011 in Egypt and Libya, for instance, disastrous concrete experiences on individual and collective levels were profoundly asymmetrically related to any general notion of "to revolt" or of "the revolution." To those experiencing personal loss, "the revolution" will never be the same. It has lost its innocence as well as any simple definition. The idea of revolting is multiplicitous, complex and ambivalent and keeps on changing from there forwards. Naturally, the meaning-events that occurred and still occur in people's experience of the world are not what we see in media reports covering a certain "event." Essentially, the fact that the meanings of words change before us every time an infinitive burrs against a present tense is hardly "news." It happens all the time. Still, in Foucault's account, these are the events that profoundly change us and change the world; they enable a new statement that was previously impossible, unthought and unspoken.

The existence of phantasms—ideas and conceptions that come to the fore as eternal—and their asymmetrical relation to the particular, enables the negotiation or emasculation of the phantasm as well as of the particular. This asymmetry is the presupposition of the event and is, according to Foucault, the condition that enables the entry of the unexpected. The sudden illumination of the phantasm in a singular repetition (as in a singular death, a dance or a revolution) cannot be said to take place either in time as succession, or in matter as a physical occurrence, or simply in the consciousness of a self.[45]

Foucault, suggests three ways in which recent philosophy has understood and handled the recurrence of the profoundly unexpected, that which actually differs: *the event*. None of these ways, he claims, manages actually to open thought and life to difference. First, Foucault argues that *neopositivism* has handled the experience of the unexpected by saying that nothing can be said about what lies "outside" the world. This, however, Foucault says, is to deny the force and multiplicity of the surface of the world. It is to deny and neglect the event; the fact that radically new things actually happen. It bases its argumentation, one could say, on too simple an account of the immanent world. Just

because one does not believe in an outside, does not mean one does not believe that the world is deeply enigmatic and can change beyond our imagination or expectations. Second, the event has been handled by *phenomenology* saying that meaning as signification only exists for consciousness. This places the event either before or after, outside or inside consciousness, yet always in relation to the solipsism of the self. That is, the events are considered a product of human consciousness, hence the unexpected exists only in relation to a thinking or experiencing subject. Third, by the *history of philosophy* that assumes that events only exist in time—that time is what organizes events and gives them solidity and identity. This is to say that events merely belong to the course of events, of which some make the headlines, on the assumption that these are the events that surprise us. Now, thinking the event in relation to the phantasm changes all this, Foucault holds. Having noted that repetition is impossible as anything but the repetition of difference, the repetition of a phantasm unavoidably indicates what is lacking in the appearance of the phantasm: the recurrence of difference, the event. The event, lacking in the phantasm, makes time (the third approach above), the self (the second) and the world (the first), all recur as difference. The event as related to the phantasm has neither essence nor centre, which is why it changes the world, the self and time.

To acknowledge the force of phantasms rather than to handle the event in any of the three ways just described is, according to Foucault, to do metaphysics in the Deleuzian way (which, to Foucault is a complete overthrow of phenomenological thought; see notes 32 and 91). "Deleuze's metaphysics," Foucault writes, "initiates the necessary critique for the disillusioning of phantasms. (. . .) It leads joyously to metaphysics—a metaphysics freed from its original profundity as well as from a supreme being."[46] This is a metaphysics, in other words, that serves to release and affirm the *force* of that which comes to the fore as eternal truth without affirming its final *power.* Beyond the simple reality of God or man, and beyond the choice between commentary and critique, the phantasms indicate diversity.

I believe, in fact, that a phantasm appeared in chapter 3 above. The commentator, Graham Ward, appeared as a phantasmic authority in his *Christ and Culture.* His own reading of the Gospel of Mark created

a phantasmic commentator identity, since the discourse presented left no logical room for such an authority. Ward the commentator was therefore undermined by his own commentary, which however created an escape beyond the phantasmic author and beyond the phantasmic Christian narrative. In the next chapter, we shall see phantasms at work also in the theology of Thomas Altizer.

A negative motion

The function of the phantasm in Foucault's reading of Deleuze, I argue, contains a kind of negative motion. Naturally, the very notion of *the negative* burrs against the Deleuzian affirmation, so let me explain in what sense I find there is a negative notion in Deleuze when read through Foucault (which will be developed in relation to Magritte in chapter 6).

The appearance of the phantasm indicates a space for other realities. This space is not a free-floating space, but rather a crack in the discourse—or in our very language—which otherwise makes it impossible for us to reach a certain insight beyond or beside the discourse. Thought no longer needs to take part in the construction and negotiation of representational concepts, since that which needs to be said, that which can change the world, is already in the discourse—in its words and things—"negatively" expressed in its gaps, flaws and asymmetries. Through the repetition of inherited so-called truths—a repetition that makes room for an unarticulated murmur—this negativity becomes visible as an indication of "something else" that is nevertheless not beyond or beside the discourse. A disobedient and transgressive repetition of the so-called truths may in fact make room for this unspoken murmuring reality.

Foucault writes: "Thought is no longer committed to the construction of concepts once it escapes good will and the administration of common sense, concerned as it is with division and administration. Rather, it produces a meaning-event by repeating a phantasm."[47] In other words, Foucault agrees with Deleuze that the *construction* of concepts will never lead philosophy beyond *that which everybody knows, no one can deny*. The history of ideas where one human being (often a man)

after another constructs and reconstructs concepts in search of an ever truer account, is bound to stay within the realm of the already familiar. Foucault does not conclude in his essay, however, that *an affirmative creation of concepts* would lead philosophy beyond common sense. Instead, he indicates that the way forward would be to produce a meaning-event by repeating a phantasm. Philosophy should playfully and disobediently repeat the givens, repeat those notions that come to the fore as truths—*what everybody knows, no one can deny*—until the very repetition will make room for a meaning-event, a change of meaning.

In consequence, perhaps the implicit (and involuntary) phantasm that appeared in Ward in the former chapter actually is more efficient when it comes to questioning the Christian notion of transcendent representation in a Deleuzian sense than are Ward's and Keller's explicit attempts to make use of Deleuzian thought in theology. If that is so, this might be due to the fact that theology is especially soaked in analogical and representational thinking, and because, as Deleuze says: "Difference is not and cannot be thought in itself, so long as it is subjected to the requirements of representation."[48] In a representational thought structure, difference cannot be thought in itself. Putting difference into words, therefore, will not serve to bring thought beyond the current limits of thought. An obsessive and disobedient repetition of the Christian phantasms, however, might pave the way for a renunciation of both the form of representation and the element of common sense. The following analyses will further explore how that may be enacted.

5

Thomas J. J. Altizer
A voyage to the bottom of repetition

In this chapter, I will relate the North American radical theologian Thomas J. J. Altizer's theology to Deleuzian post-representational perspectives.[1] I will discuss Altizer's metaphysical claims, his pretentiously singular and oracular voice and the traits of repetitious eccentricity in his writing. However, instead of regarding these peculiarities as something one must see beyond in order to reach the essence of Altizer's theology, I will try to explore whether these features, when considered fundamental theological expressions, may throw new light upon dimensions of Altizer's theological project.

Some recent interpretations of Altizer have argued for a Derridean and deconstructive understanding of his work.[2] For reasons that have become obvious in the preceding chapters, this analysis endeavors to move in another direction, drawing on what I regard as the deeply heretical drive in Altizer, and relating his theology to post-representational perspectives in Deleuze.

Altizer

Altizer was placed by the media in the theological "death of God movement" in the mid-1960s.[3] However, while other thinkers of this "group"—William Hamilton, Paul van Buren, Richard L. Rubenstein, Gabriel Vahanian, Harvey Cox, Langdon Gilkey, Don Cupitt and Dorothee Sölle (and the list could be longer or shorter depending on the point of reference)—all made good sense at the time by speaking of God's death in relation to ethical and societal circumstances, or out of

the epistemological demands of the present day, Altizer was strangely apolitical for being a radical theologian of the 1960s. He appeared, to many, provokingly uninterested in ethics, and despite what has later been labelled as his postmodernist tenor, he somehow seemed too modern at the time. Mark C. Taylor, for instance, critically remarked: "The 'Christian atheist' whose name is synonymous with the death of God is actually our most God-possessed theologian."[4]

Is God dead?

Altizer was different, not particularly political and too focused on God, but what does that mean more concretely? In the introduction I mentioned Dorothee Sölle's reflection on how God's presence may at all be understood in a world of poverty, oppression of women and in a world after Auschwitz. The Jewish theologian Richard L. Rubenstein, to take an even more profiled example, entitled his first book *After Auschwitz* (1966) and argued that the Holocaust experience shatters the traditional Judaic concept of God.[5] After Auschwitz, Rubenstein contended, Jews can no longer advocate the notion of an omnipotent God at work in history or the notion of the people of Israel as the chosen people. The traditional Judaic concept of God is dead since the covenant is dead. By comparison to Altizer, however, this did not lead Rubenstein to explicit atheism or to a conviction that God has *actually* died, nor to the conclusion that religion is irrelevant; it rather drove him to search for new ways of expressing the old faith in God.

For Altizer, the death of God was metaphysical and theological. At the same time, Altizer was convinced that God had actually died. He treated the death of God as a historical event, not as a symbol for sociological or psychological processes. It was a metaphysical, yet deeply concrete and bodily event. In Lissa McCullough's words, his position from the beginning until today is "theocentric and metaphysical."[6]

To Altizer, the death of God in modern thought reveals the true Satanic identity of the transcendent Christian God. The death of God, as the very possibility to think the world without God, reveals that the Christian God at this point in history is not only anti-life but is the very Source of repression. This revelation, in turn, negates God as

God and leads to a radically profane immanence which, in Altizer's view, is the very consequence of the incarnation. Thus, the death of God should be embraced by Christianity.[7] In modernity, a space has opened up where the world can truly be thought without God. The transcendent God need no longer resurrect, which means that God's death in modernity is nothing but the fulfilment of the Christian incarnation. According to Altizer, that is the final fulfilment of the Christ event, the very end of the crucifixion, the *telos* of the Christian history of redemption.[8]

Altizer's metaphysical and grand claims regarding the entire history of redemption made his position especially provoking when it first appeared. A historic debate in 1967 with the very orthodox Rev. Dr. John Warwick Montgomery (to an overflowing Rockefeller Chapel at the University of Chicago) placed Altizer once and for all in the history of theology. His adversary regarded him as a heretic, and while Altizer definitely had his supporters in the audience, the majority agreed to Montgomery's assessment.[9]

Repetition in Altizer

I believe it is fair to say that in the late 1960s, Altizer was theologically ostracized. While vividly discussed and attacked, his thinking had no given place within the larger theological debate.[10] In contemporary theology, on the other hand, Altizer is far from the only theologian embracing the death of God in a sense that borders on a paradoxical theological atheism. Still, while the times have changed, Altizer has not. At least not according to some of his critics, who claim that he is stuck in repetition.

Stuck in repetition?

Mark C. Taylor, for instance, contends that the fact that "Altizer repeats his conclusive claim again and again and again" indicates it is time for Altizer to take the consequences of his own gospel and actually leave God and theology behind.[11] Taylor, among others, also argues that Altizer should move towards deconstruction and thus in a Derridean

direction of thought in order to, so to speak, make his deconstructive contribution a bit more constructive.

Thus, while Altizer's position is another today, to many his theological contribution still appears quite illegible, especially his work from *The Self-Embodiment of God,* published in 1977, up through his more accessible autobiography *Living the Death of God: A Theological Memoir* of 2006.

Altizer began his academic studies in the history of religions, which is why especially his earlier works contain comparative religious perspectives, as in *Oriental Mysticism and Biblical Eschatology* (1961) and *Mircea Eliade and the Dialectic of the Sacred* (1963). From the very beginning, this outset placed his thinking outside the church related theology. It is a position that seems to have enabled, or at least assisted, his detachment from those Christian authorities that could have hindered the full development of his death of God theology. The first book in which he systematically introduced his theology had the most strikingly unorthodox title: *The Gospel of Christian Atheism* (1966). In his subsequent work, he approached the Christian controversial William Blake in *The New Apocalypse: The Radical Christian Vision of William Blake* (1967). In his book on Blake, Altizer opposes Jesus to the Christ and the Logos, and finally describes Jesus closer to the Jesus hailed by Nietzsche than that hallowed by orthodoxy. Jesus is one who, Altizer states, "resists every title, every name, and every notion by which the mind of man might weaken and ensnare him" (*The New Apocalypse: The Radical Christian Vision of William Blake,* 132). It is a Jesus far from the "priestly and all too human expression of the will to power," he says (ibid., 120). *The Descent into Hell* (1970) explores the divine movement into flesh, into the actual, earthly body. The Christian incarnation is a "descent into hell," Altizer states, since earthly, bodily life after the Holocaust cannot be viewed as in any way "heavenly" without ignoring these actual bodily historic experiences. In this manner, he brings the political reality into his own metaphysics. In 1977 Altizer wrote perhaps his most inaccessible book, *The Self-Embodiment of God* (Harper & Row, 1977), which I focus on in this chapter. According to Altizer himself it is one of his most important works, since this is where medium and message finally meet. It is a book that sums up his work

up until that point and influences all his writing from then on. *The Self-Embodiment of God* is followed by *Total Presence* (1980), *History as Apocalypse* (1985), *The Genesis of God* (1993), *The Contemporary Jesus* (1997), *Godhead and the Nothing* (2003), which in turn is followed by his fascinating memoir *Living the Death of God: A Theological Memoir* (2006), and his production continues. [12]

John D. Caputo states that in "Altizer the death of God primarily meant that the absolute centre had shifted its residence from transcendence to immanence by means of a metaphysics of *kenosis,* by which the full presence of a transcendent God was transported to the plane of immanence."[13] According to Caputo, Altizer keeps referring to the philosophical death of God but does not take the full consequences of it. Altizer does not leave the Grand Narrative or metaphysical foundation behind and he does not refrain from presenting truths about God. Altizer just replaces the old absolute truth with a new one. Caputo argues that when reproducing this Christian pattern, he manages to reproduce an anti-Jewish stance as well.[14] Altizer reproduces the history of redemption wherein Judaism is replaced by Christianity, which, in turn, in Altizer's account, is fulfilled through the developments in modern Western thought. Without freeing Altizer from this accusation, Caputo's critique is, I believe, directed at a Hegelian pattern for thought that permeates most of Western Christian thinking. The notion that a Jewish exclusivist Law was replaced by a universal Love with Christ has, inexcusably, been reproduced ever since the birth of Christianity.

Altizer indeed has his followers, but as one reviewer succinctly put it, it is also true that "the boldness and hardheadedness of Altizer's thought often is as difficult to enter as it is easy to dismiss."[15] Altizer's texts are generally hard to get through and easy to put away. In my view, they manage to be immensely complex *and* provocatively simplistic at the very same time. They question every truth that was held high by generations of Christians, and yet they confidently proclaim new truths with every sentence.

Clayton Crockett mentions Altizer as the foremost figure of the American death of God movement, but he also implies that through Altizer the entire movement—consisting of what he seems to regard

as more serious theologians like Charles E. Winquist, Mark C. Taylor, Robert P. Scharlemann, Carl A. Raschke—risks being dismissed as a fad.[16]

Is Taylor's verdict right? Is it time for Altizer to stop repeating his gospel? Is Caputo right? Does Altizer merely resuscitate the God he proclaims dead, and when doing so, does he throw out Judaism and the entire death of God philosophy as well? In this book I will suggest an approach that makes his work more comprehensible, I believe, and perhaps less dismissable—especially *The Self-Embodiment of God,* a book that, according to McCullough, "remains the purest expression of Altizer's vision, and truly to *read* this book is to read Altizer straight up, but for that very reason it is perhaps the least accessible of his works."[17] She continues by claiming that it is a "tight, terse, powerful, self-contained, seemingly airless capsule of a book" in which Altizer, like a jazz musician who has played for several years, finally finds his voice and can speak directly, even "bodily." In *The Self-Embodiment of God,* McCullough states, Altizer finds his theological voice and suddenly, all his work up until then, though communicative, sounds juvenile.[18] It is also a book, however, that many readers almost certainly open once and never again. I honestly believe that if Altizer really were a jazz musician, very few would stay long enough at his concerts to appreciate what McCullough regards as his pure and mature expression.

The Self-Embodiment of God

Let me start with an illuminating passage from this enigmatic piece of work:

> A fully self-actualized presence can only be a total presence, and a presence in which speech and silence are one. A total speech must also necessarily be a total silence, an actually total silence, a silence which is empty of every partial or isolated expression of speech. Not until these expressions of speech have passed into silence, or have enacted their own final silence, can presence be total or can speech and silence be one. Yet speech and silence are one in the final self-emptying of speech. In that act, and in its enactment, and its reenactment,

> actuality is wholly self-actualized, and is wholly self-actualized because it wholly enacts itself. And it wholly enacts itself by wholly realizing the immediate actuality of total presence. That is the presence, and the one and only presence, in which self-realization is total actualization, an actualization in which presence is both total and is actually at hand: "The resurrection and the life are I."[19]

A few features are especially striking in this very typical passage, and those are the different aspects of repetition. First, the sentences are built up by at times numerous subordinate clauses that often start by repeating the object from the foregoing clause, making the object subject in the subordinate clause. Thus a style is created where keywords are repeated and used to carry the text and the thought forward. With each repetition the understanding of the word is only slightly (at least seemingly) developed.

In *The Self-Embodiment of God,* the thinking revolves around the dialectical (or post-dialectical) relation between speech and silence.[20] In the quotation above the keywords are *presence, speech, silence* and *enactment*.[21] In a spiral motion *presence* becomes *speech* and *silence* united, a presence of self-realization, actuality that is simultaneously total and actual, that is the incarnated, the *"resurrection and life are I."* I will leave aside the question of the internal logic of this spiral of concepts for now in order to focus on what lies in the motion as such.

Repetition is, I would argue, also evident in Altizer's frequent and repetitious use of strong adjectives like "necessarily," "total," "absolute," "actually" and of statements of certainty as in the above: "the one and only presence, in which self-realization is total actualization, an actualization in which presence is both total and is actually at hand." Or: "A total speech must also necessarily be a total silence, an actually total silence." Altizer repeats absolute claims, grand assertions with every sentence (and in Taylor's view, in every book as well).

His spiraling writing could possibly be understood as meditative rather than systematic, but his repetitious stating of certainties seems to demand a more systematic understanding. In all its radicality, the repetition of certainties does give his writing an irrefutably modernistic

tone. The use of strong adjectives appears to reveal claims that are undeniably universal and grand. Altizer simply seems to be telling a "tall tale," to speak with Caputo. Instead of dismantling the Christian metanarrative—leaving the Christian absolutes behind and letting the dead bury the dead, so to speak—Altizer's statements of certainty seem to secure the presence of a universal Christian Truth, though in a somewhat heterodox guise. But is that necessarily so? Before I explore Altizer further, I would like to bring in another voice.

Deleuzian repetition

Let me recapture a few very basic Deleuzian ideas on repetition in order to enable an encounter with the repetitious features in Altizer as well as with Altizer's notion of repetition.

The singular and the particular

In *Difference and Repetition* Deleuze uses two separate accounts of difference to portray on the one hand, broadly, Kant's universal law and a Hegelian dialectic account, and on the other hand, Nietzsche's eternal recurrence. Immanuel Kant's categorical imperative famously states: "Act only according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law." Nietzsche's critique of the categorical imperative is, in a simple grammatical iteration, displayed in his replacement of the "universal law" with the "eternal return": "Whatever you will, will it in such a manner that you also will its eternal return." [22] This replacement underlines the universal law's dependence on the eternal return or, in Deleuze's words, its dependence on *repetition* as a repetition of difference. According to Deleuze's reading of Nietzsche, the universal law is a consequence of thought rather than a presupposition for thought, since the universal law is based on repetition. The Kantian notion of a universal law implies the possibility of the repetition of the Same, but repetition, Deleuze says, always presupposes difference. Repetition thus inevitably displays the impossibility of repeating the Same, that is, the impossibility of any universal law or generality. "That which is or returns," Deleuze writes,

"has no prior constituted identity: things are reduced to the difference which fragments them, and to all the differences which are implicated in it and through which they pass." "When eternal return is the power of (formless) Being, the simulacrum is the true character or form—the "being"—of that which is"[23]

First, there is the dialectical kind of difference that is displayed in the relationship between the *particular* and the *general*. According to this account of difference the particular differs from the general in a negative sense—the particular is an imperfect variety of the general. The relation between the general and the particular presupposes a notion of identity since the particularity indicates the existence of a something to which the particular is an individual and subordinate expression. As for example in the idea of a male norm, "a man in general" from which particular men differ, men who for instance, are often close to tears. *Particularity* is, then, inescapably *representational* since it always implicitly refers to an absent identity, hence the particular is not finally open for difference and change of identity as such, quite the contrary. The existence of the particular depends on and presupposes the general. The particular forms its identity as differing from the general, which reinforces the identity of the general and subsequently reinforces identity as such. The particular expression represents the general, which is why, according to Deleuze, difference is always negative when understood in terms of particularity.[24]

This kind of difference is assumed in, as above, the notion of a particular man who lacks the self-control and strength of "men in general." According to such an account of difference, there is a generality of men that implies an ideal male identity of self-control and strength, and then there are men that differ from this norm. There are particular men that differ from men in general. Deleuze writes critically on this account of difference: "difference implies the negative, and allows itself to lead to contradiction, only to the extent that its subordination to the identical is maintained."[25] In other words, in such an account of difference, one can only differ negatively from the norm, or contradict the norm if one nevertheless assumes the norm—the notion of the one identity as such. Interestingly, Altizer critiques the very same account of repetition against which Deleuze reacts, though

primarily based on Kierkegaardian repetition. For example, in his book on William Blake, Altizer writes how traditional theology and church liturgy have confined the notion of Jesus' death and resurrection to a particular historical event: "Blake's hatred of religion was primarily directed against its destructive movement of repetition; a repetition that re-presents a spatial and temporal moment of the past must bind its celebrant to an eternal repression, for a submission to a past moment of concrete time isolates the believer from the reality of both the present and the future, and enslaves him to an alien moment that is alien just because it is past."[26] Anyway, thus far the dialectical difference of *the general* versus *the particular.*

The second understanding of difference emerges out of Deleuze's reading of Nietzsche's disputed theory of the eternal recurrence. This is a notion of difference described as the relationship between *the singular* and *the universal.* Here the singular indicates the unavoidability of variation, that is, the fact that repetition of the Same is impossible since the notion of repetition in itself carries the potentiality of multiple variations through the motion that we call repetition. The notion of the singular indicates a variation that expresses "the differential mechanisms which belong to the essence and origin of that which is repeated."[27]

The universal is here not to be understood as the universal in the notion of the universal law, but as the eternal in the eternal recurrence. The universal is also introduced as "a multiplicity," as in Deleuze's phrasing of this account of difference through repetition: "One is always the index of a multiplicity."[28] A singular identity does not indicate a general law or a stable identity from which it deviates, but a multiplicity that it affirms and constitutes. For instance, the repetition of "a man" instigates a variety of expressions in the name of "a man." The repetition enfeebles and distorts the idea of a general male ideal. The very repetition of men distorts the very notion of "men in general." Each man appears as an expression of the universal "man" so that, for instance: this is *a man* who cries, this is *a man* who lacks control, this is *a man* who wears skirt, this is *a man* with a tattoo, etcetera—all expressions that indicate a multiplicity of men.

The account of difference in the relationship between the singular and the universal is, according to Deleuze, hidden in Kant's categorical

imperative but displayed in Nietzsche's eternal recurrence. Repetition of singularities is thus the field out of which the notion of the general and the particular emerges. Deleuze's notion of repetition is, as we also saw in chapter 2, intimately related to his notion of difference:

The form of repetition in the eternal return is the brutal form of the immediate, that of the universal and the singular reunited, which dethrones every general law, dissolves the mediations and annihilates the particulars subjected to the law.[29]

The singularity of repetition therefore does not, according to Deleuze, lose itself to indetermination, but contains the ability to capture the infinite potential of life "before organisation," before the addition of law. Deleuze's notion of repetition thus reveals a *virtuality.*

For instance, a definition of the Bible that aims to capture the Bible's key meaning, its essence, becomes an actuality that indicates a virtuality. The idea that the Bible can be defined and that its true message can be distilled is of course *actual*—this idea is real and affects the Christian world and even world politics. This actual idea, however, indicates a *virtuality;* it points towards the fact that such a definition is always based on the choice between an infinity of possible definitions. There is a multiplicity of Bibles, and this multiplicity is somehow also present (actual as virtuality) each time a grand and exclusive claim about the Bible is expressed. The concreteness of this example, however, should not gloss over the fact that what Deleuze aims for here is a new way to understand difference as the radically new, to understand difference as the affirmative expression that gets lost in our habitual ways of explaining a phenomenon as negatively related to an already familiar phenomenon from which it differs. Things do change, but a negative account of difference hides this fact from us.

In this way, Deleuze takes leave of representation as the very principle according to which a phenomenon—as always an expression of the radically new—can be defined in its particularity, since such an account is not open to actual change. For Deleuze, a definition or a systematization based on differenciation that aims to say what, for example, an oeuvre *really* is, may actually to a large extent miss out on *what it is* since it tends to overlook the work's creative and multiple

force. Or, rather, it is an actuality that indicates a virtuality of infinite potential.[30] With this, we shall return to Altizer.

Altizerian repetition

As we shall see, there are two kinds of identity and difference also in Altizer. Thus, if read together with Deleuze, I believe Altizer's repetition of absolutes can be understood in two different ways. Moreover, I will suggest that when the more enigmatic parts of Altizer's work is regarded, the absolutes in his text will to some extent function demanding and eroding at the very same time. The uncountable statements of certainty in a text that renounces such statements may not only evoke scepticism towards his entire project, but may even finally throw light upon the very truth claims as such and make "truth" stand forth in a new light.

Non-simple identity

Altizer's constant repetition of absolutes—in texts that claim to be speaking beyond the absolute—unavoidably serve to undermine the credibility of these absolutes as the truth claims they give themselves out to be.[31] To that extent Altizer's repetitions leave the reader with limited options: Either you accept the paradox of a text that demands a constant nodding "Yes!" to statements of absolute truth while, at the same time, claiming that its speech is beyond stable identity and truth. Or you simply dismiss the text based on its "boldness and hardheadedness" (as above). Or perhaps, as a third option, you follow the text beyond that which makes sense and read until these repetitions of truth stand forth as some kind of play with assertion as such.

In my view, this kind of gut reactions may actually say something about Altizer's endeavour. Edward S. Casey captures the starting point for such a reading of *The Self-Embodiment of God* when he describes the two different kinds of *identity* at work in this book. Like Taylor, however, Casey understands Altizer through Derridean deconstruction (and even speaks of "Altizer's atheology," drawing on Taylor's and Caputo's work) and finally critiques Altizer, as we shall see.[32] But let us stay with his instructive observation of the two kinds of identity.

Casey recognizes two different kinds of identity at work in *The Self-Embodiment of God:* the *simple* and the *non-simple* kind. First, Casey argues, there is *the simple identity,* which is a kind of identity whose fate, in Altizer's vision, is to disappear.[33] The simple identity is identity thought apart from otherness. It is, then, the kind of identity that makes it possible to differentiate *this* from *that;* to nail down what a phenomenon really is based on that from which it differs. In *The Self-Embodiment of God,* this simple identity is expressed as the idea of God's eternal presence, and according to Altizer this simple identity cannot and will not persist. In Altizer's view, the very utterance of "God" makes God's simple identity disappear. In Altizer's theological death of God, this identity as eternal presence will not stand. Altizer writes: "We acknowledge the disappearance of that presence [God's eternal presence] when we say God, and by saying God we sanction that disappearance, and thereby embody in our own voice our estrangement from an omnipresent and eternal now."[34] The word God cannot capture God's eternal presence but rather subverts the very idea of such a presence, which is why the word fails in defining a simple identity and, instead, indicates that identity is always non-simple.[35]

In consequence, the fate of the simple identity affects not only the purely theological notion of divine identity but *any* assertion that renders possible an identity free of otherness. According to Altizer: "Only an otherness that is finally other than itself can truly be other than an original and undifferentiated identity which is eternally the same."[36] The very notion of simple identity as such is, to Altizer, unavoidably self-destructive. In that very moment when identity becomes actual, spoken, incarnated in the singular moment it also becomes other than its eternal self, hence its simple and eternal identity stands forth as the delusion it truly is, and otherness appears.[37]

This can be related to Deleuze's notion of the death of God as discussed in chapter 2. When God enters into a synthetic proposition like "God is dead," God also unavoidably leaves her or his eternal position above the logic of life and death. To that extent, God is already "dead" as *eternal* and as standing above and beyond the options of life versus death when we say that "God is dead" or "God is not dead." In consequence, to speak with Altizer, God becomes other than her or his

eternal self as soon as the word "God" is spoken. When God is spoken, God unavoidably enters into a logic of absolutes versus contingencies and truth versus falsehood.

This reasoning in Altizer also relates to the problem discussed through Ward and Keller in chapter 4, in which we saw how *difference* became other than itself when it was spoken. When Ward and Keller tried to speak about diversity, the very naming of that which differed—the schizo-aspects of Christ and the chaos of the *bereshit*—turned into rather stable identities. So far the simple identity.

Second, the non-simple kind of identity, to the contrary, is in Casey's words "compounded of otherness through and through."[38] This other kind of identity inevitably contains that which undermines it as simple identity. It contains and presupposes difference, its own opposite. The non-simple account of identity makes every spoken assertion, and every utterance of a name, an identity in exile of itself—a parody of the very idea of fixed identities.[39] In Altizer's words:

When God is named as God, God is named as the God who is in exile, the God who is in exile from himself. The God who is named, the God who is spoken, is, and immediately is, only insofar as He is other than Himself.[40]

Accordingly, as in the dual account of difference in Deleuze, there is a dual account of identity (and difference) in Altizer.[41] Moreover, as in Deleuze, this dual account of difference is sided with repetition, which is why I find that a reading against the background of Deleuze's related accounts may offer a fruitful entrance to Altizer. While this would mean reading Altizer from an external perspective, it would nonetheless require a consentient, and to that extent "immanent" and affirmative, reading. It would require an acceptance of Altizer's own assumptions. It would require an acceptance of his notion of identity as non-simple identity. If Altizer's repetitious assertions were allowed to actually function as non-simple assertions of identity, this would allow the repetition of absolutes to function as a subversive play with assertion as such. As above:

> Only an otherness that is finally other than itself can truly be other than an original and undifferentiated identity which is eternally the same.[42]

Every Altizerian assertion could then appear as a singular truth: a singular, playful and dissident expression of *a* truth rather than *the* truth; the particular truth that structures the world around it. How so? Well, simply since Altizer, as noted earlier, speaks repetitiously in absolutes despite the fact that he himself has declared the absolutes dead, his statements can appear simultaneously real as virtual possibilities of something other than statements of certainty *and* real as actual statements. In that manner, Altizer's repetitious use of eternal concepts does not reinforce their generality, but reveals their singularity, to speak with Deleuze. That is to say, in such a Deleuzian account of repetition, Altizer's very *repetition* of absolutes depicts non-simple identity as it takes leave of simple identity. The very repetition of assertions indicates that every utterance of an absolute is an enactment of otherness, and this is, then, enacted precisely through the kind of repetition mania that we usually, and habitually, associate with nonsense or plain madness.

Thus understood, Altizer's *The Self-Embodiment of God* offers not primarily a system within which the words, if understood correctly, are coherent pieces, but a spiral wherein the words, in being repeated, somehow disrupt the logic of representation. In fact, I find that Altizer's own account of repetition supports such a reading.

Altizerian repetition

In a 1980 article titled "Ritual and Contemporary Repetition," Altizer discusses the notions of ritual and myth in modern literature via the Kierkegaardian notion of repetition. In the article, Altizer's takes leave of a traditionally Christian account of repetition as "cultic" repetition. He moves away from the Christian idea of a "once and for all"—as in the faith in an original act of salvation, discussed in chapter 4 above—and approaches what he calls a "ritualistic" repetition that he finds in modern literature.

The ritualistic repetition is not, then, the idea of a singular past that breaks into the present and transforms every now into the same past event. Rather, in Altizer's view, this repetition is always a "once and no more."[43] In this modern account, repetition, he says, is an imageless act behind and beyond all "mythical" meaning, that is, beyond everything we know

as "meaning."[44] It is a repetition that strives toward a notion of time that is not a cultic time of *kairos*/*chronos* (where the vertical eternity meets the horizontal time on earth) but a totality of here and now, and as such "the very opposite of a primordial Beginning or One."[45] In other words, it is a notion of repetition that takes leave of the very idea of an origin, as well as (therefore) of the very idea of *meaning.* Naturally, this account of repetition also carries its own logic and meaning. It takes leave of meaning understood, however, as that which makes sense in accordance with an idea of "simple identity" (to use a term already introduced), where a phenomenon can be captured by an original definition.

Altizer finds this "once and no more," for instance, in the poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke, who celebrates the *Einmal,* the "once," in his Ninth Elegy.[46] The "once"—understood as the once and no more—is in Rilke presented in the repetitious mode of the "once" of the "here and now."

> Once,
> for each thing, only once. Once, and no more. And we too,
> once. Never again. But this
> once, to have been, though only once,
> to have been an earthly thing—seems irrevocable.

In this rhythmically repetitious poem, as I read it, the very contingency of "the once" becomes the eternal or rather the infinitive. It becomes that which can never be cancelled just because it is once and no more, perhaps even as an imageless act behind every notion of meaning, behind every account of "myth." Beneath "myth"—understood as the level of explanation and conceptualization, of telling the story in order to make meaningful the event—beneath that Christian account of repetition there is another and disobedient repetition at work. (Which, in turn, recalls Foucault's reasoning in "Theatrum Philosophicum," as introduced in chapter 4. "Underneath" that which we generally call "events," there are meaning-events that change meaning as we know it, meaning-events that are out of control form our explicit intentions.)

To Altizer, the very notion of meaning—"the myth of meaning"—is preceded by the imageless act of repetition. The very idea of a final or original meaning is a myth produced by the *delusion* of a transcendent

God. The empty motion of repetition, on the other hand, makes every "here and now" a "once and never again": "Just once, everything only for once, once and no more."[47] The once and never again, therefore, breaks with the idea of a "once and for all" as an original and eternal transcendent meaning behind every event. Thus Altizer argues that the ritualistic repetition in modern literature manages to invert the eternal as well as the mythical (as meaning), and thereby give room for the contingency of repetition and for a disclosure of "myth as lie." The function of what he calls the "ritual" of modern literature is not to repeat the eternal in order to transform the present contingency into a moment where *kairos* (eternity) meets *chronos* (time on earth), but to expose a repetitious contingency on which even the notion of the eternal depends. He ends his article by quoting Franz Kafka's *The Trial,* where the priest tells K the story of the doorkeeper and the Law, and in Altizer's reading the story "might be understood as releasing a total human freedom, for the mythical world-order now becomes manifest as a lie: 'Die Lüge wird zur Weltordnung gemacht.'"[48] Naturally, again, Altizer's reasoning in itself is not completely irrational or meaningless, it merely introduces a new account of meaning. In other words, it is the idea of a higher and final *meaning* that Altizer puts forward as deception.

Let us recall the Deleuzian notion that repetition does not organize, that repetition does not re-establish an eternal Same but rather erodes any transcendent foundation since difference both precedes and is created through repetition. Along this Deleuzian line of thought—which appears to go along with Altizer's non-simple identity as well as with his own notion of repetition—repetition does not preserve, but erode. Each repetition of an absolute, of the eternal concepts and statements of certainty, serves to break down the very idea of an absolute. The very disobedient repetitions serve to break down the idea of an eternal God, a fixed identity or final origin, of "the once and for all" as opposed to "the once and no more." In a Deleuzian account, each repetition of transcendence serves as an epiphany of a "phantasm." Rather than displaying the consistency of the absolutes repeated in the text, the repetition itself displays, in Deleuze's terminology, the plane of consistency on which the notion of an absolute, or of a transcendent reality, is but a fold.

What seems to make sense in Altizer (though provocative sense), soon appears more and more incomprehensible. Altizer does not quite make sense. The gap between message and form appears too great for him to be trustworthy, the repetitions become nonsensical and parodic when he claims the death of transcendent truth yet affirms it with every sentence. In fact, in this regard, I believe Altizer's critics are right to dismiss him, at least if the encounter with his texts stops at that. For instance, listen to the finishing sentences of *The Self-Embodiment of God:*

> The real ending of speech is the dawning of the resurrection, and the final ending of speech is the dawning of a totally present actuality. That actuality is immediately at hand when it is heard, and it is heard when it is enacted. And it is enacted in the dawning of the actuality of silence, an actuality ending all disembodied and unspoken presence. Then speech is truly impossible, and as we hear and enact that impossibility, then we can say: "It is finished."

On the other hand, this weakness may in fact also be his strength. The point of dismissal is also exactly the point when the reading can become creative. This is when the repetition of identity somehow becomes dissident since it makes God as well as any simple identity stand forth as an illusion. In consequence, thus understood, this is also the point where message and form become one. Thus, the sceptical gut reaction that may occur when reading Altizer becomes creative: Read three pages of Altizerian repetition and the eternal return of difference disguised as an eternal God might be sensed; read his entire work it may take on the air of inevitability. The very repetition, every "once and no more" in Altizer indicates the impossibility of repetition as anything other than the playful repetition of difference, since his repetitions unsettle the very possibility of identity, of actual truth claims in his texts.

In the introduction to *The Self-Embodiment of God* Altizer writes: "The fundamental purpose of the book is to open yet another way to a new theological language, a language that will be biblical and contemporary at once and altogether."[49] Commenting on this passage,

Charles E. Winquist says that the theological quest that made him turn to epistemology (and introduce a Deleuzian "Desiring Theology") is what drove Altizer to experiment with form in *The Self-Embodiment of God*.[50] However, I would argue that Altizer has somehow succeed in his purpose. Not only, though, through his repetitious features but also by way of his "oracular voice."

The singular and oracular voice

According to McCullough, Altizer finds his oracular voice in *The Self-embodiment of God*. So far, I have regarded this voice through the notion of repetition. There is, however, another striking feature in this work that denotes a change from his earliest works, and this has to do with what we might call the "oracular": Nowhere in this book does Altizer position himself in relation to other thinkers, theologians or philosophers, but he speaks straight out like a madman or a prophet.

Voice speaks

Unlike Ward, as we saw in chapter 3, Altizer does not strive to place himself within an academic discourse. He does not bother to explain, for instance, how he differs from *this thinker* while drawing closer to *that thinker* yet suggesting a third option. The only place where Altizer does mention other thinkers in this book is in the introduction as a sign of gratitude to colleagues who have inspired him. In *The Self-embodiment of God,* his voice truly is oracular in the sense that it proclaims as if handing over a divine message. For instance, the third chapter of *The Self-Embodiment of God* opens;

> Voice speaks. And when it speaks, and as it speaks, it embodies itself. Speech is the embodiment of voice, and that embodiment is the act of voice itself. Therefore speech is also the enactment of voice, the self-enactment of voice, it is that act wherein voice enacts itself. Only voice is act and self-identity at once, and is self-identity in its act of speech, an act which is necessarily individual and unique. Voice is that act, and that act alone, which is ever other than every other act, and is

other, solely because it is itself. Therefore voice is otherness itself, and is otherness in its own identity, in its own act.[51]

In this manner, Altizer continues, like an oracular voice, which does not position itself in relation to other voices. He offers the reader no frame of reference why Altizer's voice, in a very plain sense, appears odd, singular and easy to reject.

If one follows Altizer (rather than critique him or simply dismiss him, which I admit is close at hand), I believe it could be said that the voice he creates in this book does not place itself within a larger pattern of *generality,* but speaks straight out as a *singular* expression. It is not a particular subject that speaks to the wider theological community, but a "voice," an act, that expresses itself. In the passage above, "voice is otherness itself" and voice is therefore "ever other than every other act." Voice as such is otherness, it is singular and unrelated to every other act. Accordingly, Altizer would falsify his outset if he actually did relate his "voice" to other thinkers or perspectives in this work. Such a move could in fact falsify his assumption that voice—speech and statements—is unavoidably unrelated otherness.

Mark C. Taylor is, as noted above, critical of Altizer's endeavour.[52] In Taylor's view, Altizer has not carried the death of God far enough, but is holding on to notions that ultimately disclose the remains of a profound belief in an Origin. Owing to the fact that Altizer never finally leaves the "total presence" behind, he fails to notice what is already at hand, Taylor says, namely "the endless play of presence and absence which, though neither present nor absent, is the possibility of all presence and absence."[53] Taylor then calls for a more Derridean death of God, a death of God in which the Altizerian notion of "total presence" would give way to a "presence/absence."[54] Taylor argues that Altizer should leave the absolutes behind and enter an elaborate analogical account where presence is inescapably also absence.

Casey, in turn, suggests that Altizer should move toward materiality, toward the body, "incarnation as organic materiality," in order for his "total presence" to finally succeed. Casey notes that towards the end of *The Self-Embodiment of God,* the text "suddenly reverts to an apparently outright metaphysics of presence that begs for an equally outright deconstruction."[55] In Casey's view, Altizer does not follow his own plea

for immanence and total presence but returns, instead, to metaphysics.

Contrary to Taylor's critique, I would like to suggest that the subversive strength of the Altizerian *coincidentia oppositorum* is that it is *not* an endless play of presence and absence, not an in-between or a constant deferral, nor a simple leaving behind of the absolutes, but a twisting of the language of metaphysics so that it becomes not a poststructural deconstruction of metaphysics but an *enactment* of metaphysics, beyond representation. Furthermore, it does not, as in Casey, call for either deconstruction or organic materiality since Altizer's voice, thus understood, is oracular, singular and metaphysical all at once. But how so? How is it *metaphysical?*

Metaphysical claims

In what sense is Altizer's *The Self-embodiment of God* an enactment of metaphysics beyond representation? In the following I argue that Altizer does have a point when he says that God is present in his text.

A life

When Altizer himself writes on the *The Self-Embodiment of God* he says, "I would affirm that God the Creator is present here."[56] To Altizer, "God the creator" is actually present in *The Self-Embodiment of God*. Not as a presence/absence but as an actual presence. What, then, could that mean? In order to reflect upon this claim, let me make a seemingly big leap to Charles Dickens.

In the essay "Pure Immanence: A Life," Deleuze discusses how Dickens' portrayal (in *Our Mutual Friend)* of an old disreputable man as he lies dying shows how the preservation of the old man's life has moved beyond any judgement or understanding of the man as an individual, as a particular being.[57] By means of the deathbed the infamous man's life has become 'a life' beyond individuality and particularity and thus a life worth saving. On the deathbed his life has returned to life before organisation, that is, before judgements of right and wrong, before categories of good and evil.[58] What is worth saving on the deathbed is not the individuality of the particular but the infinite potential of

the singular; the virtuality of the singular. The life of the old dying rogue is therefore defined by an extending imperative, or in Deleuzian terminology, this life is no longer as it were disguised as *being* but stands forth as *becoming*.

The imperative of saving a life arises in the uncertainty of virtuality, before any idea of "truth" is added, or when a life is stripped of the determination of "truth," of its particularity. The imperative of saving a life that has been judged on the basis of how its particularity differs from the general arises in that vanishing moment when it returns to where Truth is still a process of division. Pure life, according to Deleuze's reading of Dickens, is pure potential as found before the formation of truths. The "true" compassion in this story is not dependent upon "truth" but rather upon momentary "deception" of potential. What evokes compassion is not the particularity but the singularity, not "the truth about this man," but the potential embedded in the fact that this man is *a man,* or rather, *a life*. Underneath judgement and evaluation, underneath ideas of how a life should be or could be lived, life is valuable and full of possibilities.

How does this then relate to Altizer's metaphysical Godhead? Well, in his comments on *The Self-Embodiment of God* thirty years after it was published, Altizer writes (I quote him at length in order to show that the characteristics of his writing are still intact):

I would affirm that God the Creator is present here, and if a self-negation or self-emptying of the Creator does occur, it occurs not by way of a dissolution, but rather by way of God's own act, an act which is absolute sacrifice itself, but that sacrifice is a fulfilment of the Creator, in which the Godhead itself is even more fully and finally itself. Perhaps this does not occur in the book, or is not enacted in the book, and if so the book is finally a failure. But it can be read in such a way that it occurs, even if here the reader must transcend the author; thus the book does demand a meditational reading, a reading in which the reader actually enacts what occurs, although this may well force the reader to respond to this text as an anti-text, a text annulling or reversing the enactment for which it calls.[59]

The author himself calls for a "meditational reading," and even insists that "the reader must transcend the author." The reader is obliged to

go along with the author's project, throwing herself into his repetitious spirals, and in fact becoming a part of the project itself. And if she does so, she will encounter nothing less than God the Creator.

This certainly sounds pretentious, perhaps even slightly mad, but Altizer's claim is, in fact, suggested by this very analysis. The quotations from *The Self-Embodiment of God* above could very well be said to be an "anti-text, a text annulling or reversing the enactment for which it calls" since the reversal of the text itself is precisely what is caused by the repetitious spirals and the repetitions of absolutes. And along the lines of the above one could agree that "a self-negation or self-emptying of the Creator does occur" simply by stating that as a result of the repetitious style of writing, the God concept is emptied and negated, along with the very assertions of the text and the notion of simple identity. They are weakened as absolute and general but reinforced as universal/singular—the killing of God as origin and transcendent identity in the text is neither less nor more mystical, neither less nor more actual. It is a twist from particular identity to singular, non-simple identity, simply performed through repetitions and absolute statements from a singular, "oracular" voice. A voice that undermines its own credibility through repetitious assertions sided with an explicit critique of assertions. Furthermore, it disregards the general debate and writes itself out of the general.

In Deleuze's view, repetition reveals potential before formation. If Altizer's repetitious spirals are considered in this way, then they would be nothing but the self-emptying of the God-notion. Just as "a life" and the true compassion for life in Dickens' story is hidden underneath layers of truth, likewise is Altizer's dead God hidden beneath layers of absolute concepts and singular statements of certainty. The stubborn illness manages to strip Dickens's man of his unbearable particularity and reveal an invaluable life. Similarly, Altizer's headstrong repetition of certainty calls forth his self-emptied God, the Godhead as an abyss, or perhaps, as a principle of uncertainty, difference before organisation. It is a God, in Deleuze's words, before good and evil, before the organisation of the sacred as opposed to the profane. A God stripped of transcendence and Christian orthodoxy.[60]

At one point, being in agreement with Deleuze on repetition, the philosopher Slavoj Žižek writes: "One can only truly betray an author

by way of repeating him."[61] This verdict can be related to Altizer, who does not repeat an author, however, but God. It is William Blake's "Urizen" itself that is repeated until it is finally dead—or rather, until it continuously dies and keeps on dying. This happens in the text, not as an endless play of presence and absence nor as an organic materiality, but as a recurring metaphysical or "phantasmaphysical" event.

Contrary to Mark C. Taylor, who implies that Altizer should take the consequences of his own gospel and stop talking about God, I find that the fact that Altizer *does not* stop talking about God is what finally makes him succeed in his aim to enact the death of God. The God concept, and thus the identity concept, is emptied through his very writings, yet through this emptying a radically new concept of God and identity is created. Altizer writes: "Accordingly, the God who is spoken or who is named is an embodiment of otherness. And insofar as God is named as God, the source of otherness is named. Thereby is likewise named the ground of all that identity which can never be simply or only itself."[62] The very naming of God, he says, is a revelation of difference. "To speak of God is to speak of otherness, of a final otherness, an otherness which is the same only insofar as it is other."[63] According to the British theologian David Jasper, Altizer's metaphysics can thus be characterized as an "absolute loss that is, at the same time, the moment of the profoundest creativity."[64]

Rather than reaching for a language that can make the Christian transcendence meaningful in a new way, rather than conceptualizing the monstrosity of Christian theology, Altizer has created a language ever more impenetrable and repetitive in order to force the reader beyond the limits of dialectical logic as a logic of simple identity and opposition and thus beyond the traditional Christian structure for thought.[65]

Even though his theology certainly could be said to present a mythical explanation of the salvation history, what stands forth in his life long production is not simply an inverted myth of Christianity but, just as Taylor notices, an obsessive repetition of the deceptive frauds of Christian metaphysics. Through repetition of the absolutes—of God and Satan, life and death—he could be said to subversively empty their representational value and to re-create them as "phantasms" or as

a play with assertion. This, perhaps, since Altizer is aware of the risk of reviving the traditional and absolute transcendence—not only in theology but *particularly* in theology.

After the hype of the mid-1960s the debate around Altizer's theology has kept to the realm of his true admirers. In view of my reading, though, the actual marginalization of his theology could in fact be said to demonstrate rather than question the efficiency of his critique of the Christian notion of God. Altizer's theology is perhaps an apocalyptic spasm without possible continuation, a destruction of dialectics and thus an end of theological thought, but an end that, in accordance with his "once and no more," demands mass production.[66]

6

The repetition of phantasms in Foucault

Contemporary theological writings on Foucault often broach the relation between Foucault's thought and negative theology.[1] As we saw in chapter 4, there is a negative motion in Foucauldian thought, but is it fair to call his thinking a negative theology? In the present chapter I explore the negative motion in Foucault as it is expressed in an essay on the artist René Magritte and discuss how this negative motion may relate to theology, especially to the notion of negative theology.[2] In the first part of this chapter I take James Bernauer's description of Foucault as a negative theologian as a point of departure for exploring the negative versus the affirmative in Foucault's essay on René Magritte. In the next part I suggest that Swedish theologian Emilia Fogelklou actually introduces a post-representational account of the negative in a way that relates to that of Foucault but that, contrary to Foucault, uses this approach theologically.

Affirmation and negation in Foucault

James Bernauer recurrently states that Foucault's thinking is a contemporary form of negative theology. He argues that Foucault's critique of the modern subject helps us to escape from yet another conceptualization of God.[3]

In its negation of those positive attributes which risk reducing the mystery or the Transcendent, negative theology forced theologians to distance themselves from their own intellectual creations. Foucault's negative theology is a critique not of the conceptualizations employed for God, but of that modern figure of finite man whose identity was put forward as capturing the essence of human being.[4]

Bernauer suggests that by questioning the subject as the modern surrogate for God, Foucault places himself in a tradition following those Christian thinkers who refrain from positive statements about God in order not to mitigate God's transcendence and mysteriousness. "Foucault's thought may be regarded as a modern form of negative theology, his effort to overcome that figure of man whom modernity has fashioned as a substitute for the Absolute, and whose quasi-divinization entailed a flight from humanity."[5]

Bernauer's reiteration of the connection between Foucault and negative theology has two unintended effects. First, to label Foucauldian thought a negative theology in this way limits the Foucauldian project and reduces its theological significance to a mere critique of the subject. It then misses out on the far-reaching effects—philosophically, theologically and politically—of the larger negative motion of which this critique, in my view, is but a part. I believe that if the negative motion in Foucault is viewed in relation to his critique of representation, then this negative motion reaches much further than the critique of the subject.

Secondly, the connection between Foucault and negative theology might lead one to believe that there is a traditional *apophatic* theological motion in Foucauldian thought that strives to preserve and confirm the eminence and existence of the transcendent dimension by securing the inaccessibility of any final truth of this transcendent dimension. But this is just not the case. In other words, when mentioned together with "negative theology" Foucault is brought back into the economy of representation, resuscitating and protecting its long-lasting divinity, placing God safely in an inaccessible transcendence.[6] Arthur Bradley has formulated the root of this problem in a very explicit way: "The via negativa is not ultimately negative at all because it is always concerned with reappropriating its negations into a higher positivity."[7] The *apophatic* tradition in theology, thus understood, finally aims to ensure the eminent mysticism of Christian transcendence. In fact, in his 1966 essay on Maurice Blanchot, Foucault himself opposes such an account. Foucault notes that the "characteristic movement of mysticism is to attempt to join—even if it means crossing the night—the positivity of an existence by opening a difficult line of communications with it."[8] Regardless of how that existence is understood, Foucault continues, even

"when that existence contests itself, hollows itself out in the labor of its own negativity, infinitely withdrawing into a lightless day, a shadowless night, a visibility devoid of shape, it is still a shelter where experience can rest."[9] In Foucault's view, that "shelter," the existence that mysticism aims towards, is created just as much by the Law and the Word as by "the open expanse of silence."[10] It is created and recreated by *apophatic* and *cataphatic* speech alike, and neither movement is what Foucault is after.

The negative in Magritte

Anyone who has read Michel Foucault, however, has encountered what I here call a negative motion or a negative figure of thought. This negative figure is not merely present in his "death of man," which negatively opens thought beyond humanity or humanism, or in his interpretations of Deleuze in "Theatrum Philosophicum," discussed in chapter 4. Rather, his entire work is in a sense characterized by a negative dramaturgy. It is a dramaturgy wherein that which is taken for granted—for example, the medical differentiation between mental illness and sanity—is scrutinized until this given suddenly stands forth as negotiable.[11] A different world order negatively stands forth, and the reader is left with a feeling that things could be otherwise.

The negative motion can be found on many levels and in different aspects of Foucault's thinking and writing. For the purpose of suggesting a few theological implications that nevertheless keep the distance from apophatic theology, I will address the negative as depicted in Foucault's essay on the Belgian painter René Magritte, "Ceci n'est pas une pipe," or "This Is Not a Pipe," first published in *Cahiers du chemin 2* in January 1968 (thus written around the same time as "Theatrum Philosophicum").[12] In this famous essay Foucault discusses the negative versus the affirmative by discussing the art of Magritte versus that of Wassily Kandinsky.

The essay begins with an analysis of the first of Magritte's two pipe paintings, *Ceci n'est pas une pipe* of 1926.

This painting, Foucault says, has a way of simultaneously asserting contradictory statements. The sentence below the image of the pipe may be read in many different ways, none more correct than the other, but

all true at the same time. It says, perhaps most directly, that this (the pipe) is not a pipe. Either, then, simply that "this" (the pipe) is not a pipe but something else. What it *is* might depend on context or use. Or, it says that it is an *image* and therefore not a pipe.[13]

The painting also says that "this"—the words referring reflexively to themselves—is not a pipe.[14] This second statement is underlined, Foucault suggests, by the fact that the image of the pipe is so ideal, so obviously a pipe, that it would be ridiculous to try to make it any clearer by using words to say "this is a pipe." Which, in consequence, would explain why the words must state that they are not, in any way, a pipe.[15] The clarity of the image makes the words stand forth as *words,* and words are not their object. Or, as Deleuze will describe the core of Foucault's work years after this essay: statements are not visibilities and visibilities are not statements.[16]

At the same time the painting says: "this"—the combination of words and image—is, of course, not a pipe.[17] Thus, the painting also says that a painting is not its object, it is not a copy of a model existing in some absent or transcendent reality, but a reality in its own right. It is not referring to something outside of the canvas, but is in itself an event on the canvas.

Now, what is it in this painting that enables the simultaneous stating of these opposing statements and that, by doing so, questions the very logic of representation? It is naturally the whole composition of the ideal pipe with the negative statement, but Foucault (with his eye for that which is too obvious for the rest of us to notice) points out what such a simple composition creates: the empty space between the words and the image. It is the same blank space as that between image and text in an illustrated book, where it, Foucault says, functions as "the interstice where classifications, designations, nominations and descriptions are established."[18] In Magritte's painting, however, the blank space between image and text has recognized its own power and uses the force of this power to question the very idea of such classifications. It simply refuses to play by the rules of resemblance. This leads Foucault to consider Magritte's second painting of the pipe, *Les Deux mystères* (1966).

Drawing out the implications of this second painting, Foucault pictures a teacher holding a ruler. The teacher is standing in front of

a class trying to sort out the different levels of meaning—or rather, negations of meaning and signification—in Magritte's first painting, which we now see standing on an easel. The teacher's explanatory sentences turn to stutters by the many levels of negation, that is, the ever multiplying ways in which "this is not a pipe." More and more frustrated, the teacher points to and repeats the only usable yet hopelessly inoperative sentence: "this is not a pipe." The painting seems to negate meaning as such, hence the words for giving an answer to the simple question, "what is it?," fails. And then, as the teacher desperately stumbles for words, suddenly behind the teacher appears a large and unmistakably clear image—a pipe! The students cry out, laughing, shouting; "a pipe, a pipe, it is a pipe!" The voice of the teacher sinks even lower, as the teacher's stuttering turns to a murmur, "this is not a pipe," whilst the floating image of the pipe rises behind the teacher's back.

According to Foucault, the teacher is still right. No matter how ideal and clear the image might be, the image of the pipe is not a pipe since the words used to explain the image are not the image, and the words and the pipe together are not a pipe, and so on. "Nowhere is there a pipe!" Thus, Magritte has simply eroded the "common place" of resemblance and illustration.[19] The common place for word and object has disappeared, hence the words are no longer signifying and the teacher is forced to go from statements to murmur. And with the effacement of the *common place* of words and objects the *commonplace* also disappears;[20] that which Deleuze describes as "what everybody knows and no one can deny," such as: "that is a pipe."

The pipe is still there, it is real and actual, but also somehow an "illusion" since the object evades linguistic definition. By repeating the ideal flanked by a blank space refusing to do its job, the painting shows that there is no *absolute* ideal if one takes away the logic of resemblance and analogy.

The murmur is a crucial concept here. The notion of the murmur relates to Foucault's reading of Blanchot. In Blanchot, Foucault discovers a language of that which cannot be spoken, a language that addresses death. It is not, however, a language that tries to overcome death with the beauty of its words nor by putting death into words that give it meaning and thus annul its finitude. On the contrary, it is a language, Foucault

says, that aims to stay in the presence of death. A language that stays aware of the fact that it cannot articulate death, it cannot make death visible, since it can never actually witness it. Instead, like the school teacher who tries to find words for the destruction of representation in Magritte, Blanchot is consigned to murmur. He is forced to (or he forces language to) stay in the impossible, by speaking to death and of death, by speaking to and of the unspoken which, in turn, places him in what Foucault calls "an infinity of murmurs": "Blanchot's language addresses death: not in order to triumph over it in words of glory, but so as to remain in that orphic dimension where song, made possible and necessary by death, can never look at death face to face nor render it visible: thus he speaks to it and of it in an impossibility that relegates him to an infinity of murmurs"[21] Blanchot has opened up Foucault's awareness of that which remains unspoken. This idea was discussed and exemplified above in relation to Keller and Ward in chapter 5. That analysis indicated that if we try to speak of that which we cannot look at face to face, we will speak of something else. If we try to put the presence of difference and diversity into words, it will escape us. We will unavoidably reintroduce the visibility of the mirror and address a kind of double, which is something else than that presence of which we wanted to speak.

The affirmative in Wassily Kandinsky

Before we return to the question of negative theology, let us see how Kandinsky embodies the affirmative or positive against which I believe the negative in Foucault should be understood.

Foucault trusts two interrelated principles to have ruled the world of painting from the fifteenth until the twentieth century, a principle of *separation* and one of *connection,* and he suggests Kandinsky was the first to break one of these rules. Foucault argues that Kandinsky and Magritte alike have left both principles behind, but he holds Magritte's resistance to be more subversive than Kandinsky's.

The first principle, which ruled painting for centuries, asserted the *separation* between "plastic representation," which implies resemblance, and "linguistic reference," which excludes resemblance.[22]

Images resemble while words explain. Consequently, images should not explain and words should not resemble. A poetical reaction against this "principle" is expressed, for instance, in the poem of Guillaume Apollinaire in which the words are actually used for resemblance.

According to this first principle, words do not resemble reality but represent it, while images cannot represent but merely resemble. The meaning of a painting needs to be put into words in order for it to represent, say, a political view.

The second principle suggested by Foucault is, "the equivalence between the fact of resemblance and the affirmation of a representative bond." If a painting resembles a pipe, there is a presupposed *connection* to the representative statement: "that is a pipe." "What you see is *that*."[23] This second principle is ruptured by Kandinsky, who explicitly and persistently maintains that the colours and the lines of his works are "things" in exactly the same way as a bridge or a church is a thing. To that extent his paintings affirm rather than resemble or represent. Foucault writes:

> Kandinsky's is a naked affirmation clutching at no resemblance, and which, when asked "what it is," can reply only by referring itself to the gesture that formed it: an "improvisation," a "composition"; or to what is found there: "a red shape," "triangles," "purple orange"; or tensions or internal relations: "a determinant pink," "upwards," "a yellow milieu," "a rosy balance."[24]

The colours and lines are events rather than copies of events. His work is about creating a new world, an event, on the canvas. It is about affirmation and creation.

Comparing Kandinsky's work to Magritte's in this regard, Magritte's work appears the diametric opposite. Magritte seems devoted to exact resemblance. His paintings are generally meticulous, almost ideal images of everyday objects.

According to Foucault, however, this repetition of the ideal is what makes Magritte's work an efficient critique of the logic of representation. Magritte plays by the rules of resemblance and analogy to the point of absurdity and beyond. If an artist like Andy Warhol uses repetition for deconstructing and emptying symbolic values, Magritte uses

repetition to undermine the very principles behind symbolism, behind representation as such.

The first principle—that of separating the function of images from the function of words—is made to stand forth in its absurdity through Magritte's simple but persistent disjunction of image and subtext. This is seen in the painting *La clef des songes* (1930), in which Magritte separates the words from the image and the image from the words. Beneath the meticulously painted egg is written *acacia,* beneath the shoe *the moon,* beneath the hat *the snow,* beneath the candle *the ceiling,* beneath the water glass *the storm* and beneath the hammer *the desert.*

Or, as Magritte himself puts it: "What one must paint is the image of resemblance—if thought is to become visible in the world."[25] This is because the rules for resemblance are also the most basic rules for thinking, for making sense. They are the rules that say, on the one hand, that words and language are separated from images and things, yet, on the other hand, that they are analogically related.[26]

Still, we all somehow know these "rules" are not the bottom line simply since images function in so many more ways than can be put into words, and words function in many more ways than can be illustrated, or translated into other words (recalling the disjuncture between language-being and light-being in Deleuze on Foucault, treated in chapter 2). Magritte brings forth the familiar until it becomes absurd, thus a different world order negatively stands forth—it could be otherwise, it seems to say.

Why does Foucault somehow side with Magritte's negative motion rather than the affirmative creativity of Kandinsky? What is the "positive" against which Foucault reacts in this essay? In my view, it is nothing like the positive claims of *cataphatic* theology against which *apophatic* theology reacts. Rather, what Foucault reacts against is naïve belief in the possibility of creating a new language or a new imagery without, in the very same motion, creating a new universe just as absolute as the one just left behind. Or, as Foucault writes in his essay on Blanchot: "Anyone who attempts to oppose the law in order to found a new order (. . .) will only encounter the silent and infinitely accommodating welcome of the law."[27] For that reason, I find it utterly misleading to describe Foucault as a negative theologian in the way Bernauer does.

Because, here we touch upon what lies behind the figure in Foucault related to negative theology on a more profound level. As we can see, the positive/affirmative against which Foucault reacts, e.g. in Kandinsky, is nothing like the traditional theological positive a-nd dogmatic language against which a negative language in theology reacts (or works along side with). Both Magritte and Kandinsky left that position long ago (and so did Foucault for that matter). Rather, a comparable expression of what Foucault reacts against, within the theological sphere, would be those theological realms where the theological language is continuously reinvented, where new words for the divine are made up, new liturgies created, new theological symbolic universes are continuously built.

Why, then, would he indirectly react against such reinventions? Well, simply because creating a new conceptual universe always also entails creating a new shared transcendence; a new set of commonly shared and hallowed truths. Through Magritte, Foucault reacts against the naïve belief that one can create a new language or a new imagery that would not create a new universe just as absolute as the one left behind, no matter how contextual and creative one attempts to be.

Thus Foucault elevates Magritte's negative motion over Kandinsky's simply because the unnamed "otherwise" that eventuates out of the erosion of the given is always more multifaceted than a new universe created by any one thinker or painter. Approaching a theological setting, one might assume that while a painting by Kandinsky could turn representation and resemblance on their heads by hanging in a gallery or when presented by the painter himself, the very same painting used as an altarpiece is likely to be brought right back into the logic of representation. The churchgoers are likely to ask themselves: "Where is God in this painting, how is God represented now?" Thus, the "timid creatures"—those who do not quite fit into any familiar representational pattern and precisely therefore may be openings to the unexpected—will be silenced once again.

Magritte, Foucault writes, is pursuing "as closely as possible the indefinite continuation of the similar, but excising from it any affirmation that would attempt to say what it resembled. It is an art of the 'Same,' liberated from the 'as if.'"[28] In other words, according to Foucault, we might always have to deal with the idea of "the Same," but

rather than organizing our world through an analogical logic of the "as if" in order for it to make sense, a disobedient repetition of the Same, of the ideal—what we may call a repetition of phantasms—might rupture the world that we know.[29]

"Post-representational theology"

Taking a theological heritage to be one of thought, liturgy and dogma, I believe the idea of a repetition of phantasms, as a path beyond inclusivism and exclusivism, could open up a post-representational approach for theology and even for liturgy. It would be a kind of phantasmic "materialist" theology beyond representation.

I say "materialist" merely to underline that in this account, the truths of the theological inheritance—the theological phantasms—are actual, present and active. The pipe, visible to everyone, makes the students shout and laugh at the teacher, who negates its obvious presence. Similarly, to say that God, or Christian doctrine *does not exist* and that they play no role in contemporary world politics is just as ridiculous—just as laughable. Yet to say that these notions refer to an actual object or to actual truths is, if not plain nonsense, then at least a very limited way of understanding any phenomenon.

Accordingly, if one were to imagine a task for a "post-representational theology," the task would not be to create a new language, new imagery or new liturgy to replace the old, but it might well be, for instance, to stubbornly and disobediently repeat the old truths until they stand forth as negotiable. To make theological use of the negative figure in Foucault would not mean that theologians should refrain from using Christian doctrine positively while still preserving a place beyond knowledge for a higher or final dogmatic truth (as one might interpret Bernauer's comparison to negative theology or the contemporary liturgical movement of the *via negativa*).

Instead, such a theology should note that every dogmatic repetition, every Christian piece of art, every altarpiece repeating its story, every liturgical repetition of words and gestures, every dogmatic repetition of ideas is—just like the pipe on the wall—real, actual, present, affecting our world, our bodies and minds, but therefore not

in any way final. With every repetition, these inherited truths are up for grabs.

Still, what would characterize such a theology? Is there such a theology? Representation has been discussed in different ways throughout the history of theology, though only briefly in relation to what I have described as Deleuze's and Foucault's post-representation. The post-representational approach presented here nonetheless has a kind of precursor in Swedish theology. Through Emilia Fogelklou, in the next chapter we shall encounter a theological possibility that is neither a traditionally negative theology nor an affirmatively creative theology.

7

Emilia Fogelklou

The work of the Swedish writer and theologian Emilia Fogelklou is inspired by many of the same thinkers who influenced Foucault and Deleuze in the mid-twentieth century. This could explain why her theological writings express a spiritual approach that corresponds to the ideas introduced above.

Emilia Fogelklou

Emilia Fogelklou (1878–1972) was a writer, scholar, lecturer and educater, an influential voice in the womens movement, in the work for peace and in the European post-war work with refugees. She was also the first woman in Sweden to take a degree in theology (1909). As a pacifist and a spiritual seeker, she later became a quaker and in 1935 Fogelklou took part in founding the Quaker society in Sweden. Fogelklou has been introduced to an English speaking audience mainly through Malin Bergman Andrew's *Whirlwind of life: the story of Emilia Fogelklou* and Howard T. Lutz' *Reality and Radiance: Selected Autobiographical Works of Emilia Fogelklou*.

Her most renowned work is of two kinds; autobiographical novels and spiritual/philosophical collections of essays.[1] Her spiritual and philosophical essays, which will be in focus in the presentation below, are mainly published in *Form och strålning* ("Form and Radiance," 1958) and *Minnesbilder och ärenden* ("Memories and Messages," 1963).

There is a constant hesitation when it comes to labelling this part of her work. In the following I will call it *contemplative*.[2] However, the choice of the term "contemplative" should not be understood as a disregard of the philosophical and theological weight of these writings.

Rather, it should be regarded as an attempt to capture her spiritual endeavour which is unique for her time and place. It is unique since it strives away from the dominating theology of her time—which she finds too dogmatic—and the philosophy of her time—which she finds too rationalistic, in order to create a new horizon for thought.

Indirect speech

A stylistic characteristic of Fogelklou's writing, both in the autobiographical work and in the philosophical essays, is the frequent use of quotations. When quoting her own private documents in her biographical novels Fogelklou even keeps the original first person, which results in a fascinating split within the autobiographical self.[3] The main character, who is a fictionalization of the author quotes the actual author. It is interesting to note that both the use of quotations and the use of a fictive character makes Fogelklou's speech *indirect.*

The use of indirect speech through quotations is common within Quaker spirituality, whereas indirect speech is the speech for *listeners* rather than speakers and the listening approach is of course highly valued in Quaker faith and practice. However, this stylistic feature also has fascinating theological and philosophical implications.

In Fogelklou's writing—often built up as a weave of quotations—the author's voice hits the reader indirectly. It does so in the most concrete sense since it forces every commentator into whirling references (" . . . as suggested by Fogelklou through the art critic Gino Severini . . . ," or "as claimed by Fogelklou through an unknown artist quoted in an unspecified Swedish newspaper . . ." etc). However, this indirect speech not only places the author's voice slightly to the side when her texts are referred. It also, secondly, creates a patchwork of voices and thus indicates a scattered "I" who speaks. The author in her patch-work texts does not assume a singular form. Her texts create no singular or authoritative author voice.

Naturally, all theoretical texts can be said to build on a patch work of quotations and referred voices. In what way does Fogelklou differ? Well, unlike for instance Graham Ward, she does not quote renowned thinkers or writers in particular. She simply refers whomever contributes

to what she regards as a discursive expression of what she sets out to describe. Scholar of literature Ingrid Meijling Bäckman underlines that Fogelklou tends to enter quotations into her texts without paying regard to their original context.[4] Neither, then, does she seem to care whether the quoted source is renowned, whether the source as such is of relevance for her argument, nor does it seem to worry her whether the quote is correctly used and understood once taken out of its original setting.

Significantly, Fogelklou herself describes her *Form and Radiance* as "fragments of a view of life, sided by mirrorings of contemporary seeker-movements, to the extent that they have reached me."[5] Meijling Bäckman understands Fogelklou's indirect speech as a humble way of writing and relates it closely to the feminine ideal of the 19th century "stressing humility and altruism." While I believe Fogelklou was influenced by such a feminine ideal, I also think that Fogelklou uses this feminine but also *spiritual* ideal of humbleness to go her own way. In my view, the implications of her writings, along with her style of writing, reaches further than feminine ideals of past times. Her use of quotations is not only humble but also highly disrespectful in relation to the academical ideals of which she, as a scholar and teacher, was fully aware.

The quotations she uses do not strengthen her own authority in the texts, quite the opposite—she herself merely "mirrors" other viewers and listeners. Her continual use of quotations effects an emasculation of the will and force of the subject in her writing, but not simply as a woman giving in for humility. Rather, it impairs intentionality as stemming from a singular point and thus underlines what I believe is a key drive in her work; the critique of the subject and the critique of representational dualism that comes with it. I find this, for instance, expressed in her most famous poem (which also shows her devotion to Nietzsche), "I will not will and not not-will. But I will be willed by my being's God."[6]

In *Form and Radiance,* the "I" who speaks, the author subject, recurrently disappears. If there is a phantasmic author subject in her work, it is broken down into pieces on every page. Fogelklou's contemplative work is a patch work. Her essays are built up by an

author voice that collects voices and, through the very same gathering motion, scatters herself. Naturally, this also makes her texts hard to read at times and her thoughts hard to follow. However, I do not believe this is due to an inability to be clear or speak up. In relation to the post-representational ideas that inspired both her and Foucault and Deleuze, in the following, I would like to describe what I regard as the force of her spiritual and philosophical approach.

Where is the meaning?

As is the case with both Deleuze and Foucault, Fogelklou has always puzzled her readers—at least those outside of Fogelklou's Quaker community or the wider Christian context. At the recent republication of Fogelklou's *Arnold,* Swedish literary critic Nina Björk wrote:

> She writes in Swedish. She writes in such a Swedish that my mother tongue becomes a language I do not understand. Listen to this: "The very art of radiance is its 'form'—vibrations through an infinite multiplicity of personal worlds and circles of figurations in all grades of reach and creative transformations." By the context I understand that it has to do with faith in God. But that is all I get. Where is the meaning?[7]

Björk finds Fogelklou's writing too enigmatic and even "suffocating" to finally make sense.[8] I understand Björk's reaction. Fogelklou's writing is at times not only difficult but even disturbingly mystifying in its spiritual and flowery appearance.

I also believe, however, that Björk fails to grasp the reason behind this spiritual prose and its inherent keys. As I understand Fogelklou, she is writing in order for theological meaning to change. Fogelklou is writing to enact transgressions of current spiritual truths which, naturally, makes her prose enigmatic and hard to decipher, just as is the case with, for example, Foucault's school teacher and Altizer's repetitions. I believe that Fogelklou, like Altizer, can be understood as one who searches out an untraveled theological path.[9]

Unlike the mystical negative theological tradition, Fogelklou does not aim to preserve the eminence of transcendence, but neither does

she believe that the formal and transcendent dimension could (or should) ever be cast out, nor that new and liberating truths can simply be created.

Form and radiance

I find there are a couple of concepts that one must grasp if one wants to enter Fogelklou's thought. These concepts are her own and thus they serve as a kind of glue between the richness of quotations, and also as keys to her own contribution.

First, the concept of *form,* which captures that which comes to the fore as true, solid and stable: solid concepts and ideas such as the subject–object dialectic, Christian doctrines, and also actual, material things, as well as forms of art and poetry. Fogelklou's *form,* I will argue, may be related to the pipe in Foucault's reasoning on Magritte (as well as to the metaphysics and the phantasm described above). The notion of *form* is in Fogelklou coupled with her second key concept, *radiance.*

Radiance is to Fogelkou both the opposite of, *and* intrinsic to, form. Radiance is the life, the force and the changeability of form. It is the inner light and energy of every form, yet it is inexistent without form. Fogelklou's radiance relates to the notion of *inner light,* which is crucial within Quaker thought and faith.

The inner light is understood in innumerable ways within the Quaker community, since Quaker spirituality is based not on doctrine or the repetition of certain truths or narratives, but on silent worship. Generally, however, I believe it can be said that the inner light is seen as a kind of divine presence (though not necessarily "divine," since not all Quakers are theists) internal to every human being. To encounter this radiance in oneself or in others is to encounter spiritual force or reality.[10] Fogelklou does not use the notion of *inner light* primarily, but that of *radiance,* which allows her to develop it by conjoining other, often philosophical, aspects with the spiritual notion of inner light. Still, I believe it is helpful to keep the connection to this spiritual tradition in mind as we enter the more philosophical parts of Fogelklou's oeuvre.

In Fogelklou's philosophical essays, I will argue, the notion of *radiance* comes close to what one might call the force of the phantasm:

the force that makes it possible for the ideal Pipe of the former chapter to open thought beyond the idea of an ideal as such. The radiance in Fogelklou, moreover, recalls the Deleuzian notion of the virtual as opposed to, and yet intrinsic to, the actual (as form).

In my view, this couple of concepts in Fogelklou, *form* and *radiance,* function to emasculate the repressive power of form (as dogma, formalities, solid matter), as well as transgress the limits of artistic expression, while at the same time asserting the intrinsic force of these phenomena. In Fogelklou's terminology, these notions serve to open our eyes to the radiance inherent to form. Her concepts of form and radiance open up a playful yet forceful account of anything that comes to the fore as solid or ideal—as, for instance, the ideal expression of a pipe.

Gunnel Vallquist rightly states that it "would be a mistake to think that in Emilia Fogelklou's view form and radiance are opposing concepts bearing negative and positive charges. Form, including religious dogma, is not something to be rejected, but something that must not become restrictive. It must be transcended, irradiated. Then it can itself acquire new meaning and radiant power."[11] In Vallquist's view, form and radiance are not opposites, but in a sense, finally interchangeable—a reasoning that captures well, I think, the dynamic of form and radiance in Fogelklou.

Vallquist's interpretation might mitigate or gloss over, however, the intensity of Fogelklou's critique of formalities as representations of a higher transcendence. Fogelklou fiercely rejected any such dualist account. For instance, Ulf I. Eriksson underlines the synthesis of the extrovert and the introvert, or the exterior and the interior, in Fogelklou's thinking. To Fogelklou, the dual account of the world is finally a restrictive notion of "I" as distinct from "the world," and such a construed separation of the self and the world is what hinders the creativity of life, he states.[12] It seems to me then that Fogelklou, like Foucault, discovers the force of form as phantasm, a playful disruption of the formal and ideal, of the representational and the dualistic: the force that Fogelklou calls the radiance internal to form. The following exemplifies how Fogelklou discusses these concepts.

Burst form

Fogelklou does not use the concept of "post-representation" to describe her era or her approach, but she does describe a historical development beyond representation that recalls that found in Foucault's *The Order of Things*.

Fogelklou's essay "Transfigurations of Perspectives" ("Synsättens förvandlingar") published in her 1958 book *Form and Radiance* (*Form och strålning*) discusses the change of light in art from the medieval period onwards. She takes her outset in medieval art and notes that in medieval paintings all image light is inner light. The colours somehow shine from the objects outward, hence there are no shadows in these paintings. The light source of the medieval image-world, Fogelklou argues, is immanently situated. If one were to turn this light out, the entire image-world would become not only invisible but inexistent, she states.[13] In the fifteenth century, she notes that a radical transformation occurred. The light source was now placed outside the painting and shadows appeared. Fogelklou describes this change of light as a change of interest; it is a turn away from *divine matter* and towards the *human gaze,* towards the *transcendent view point*.[14]

Once again, since then, there has been a change in light, she claims. In Fogelklou's own time she notes how the human gaze is being replaced by a new materiality in contemporary art and knowledge.[15] It is a materiality that "vibrates," she says; it is a new account of form in "a time that belongs to light in motion, to radiance." Fogelklou is deeply intrigued by the scientific discoveries of her time, especially developments in physics, with scientists like Niels Bohr. According to Fogelklou, the art of her own time has a form that is neither static nor transcendent but vibrant and immanent. It is a new materiality that shines, once again. However, this new materiality occurs outside the former limits of matter, which is why it does not instigate a "return" to a medieval account of matter and light. Still, it cannot it be separated from matter, from *form*—only from matter as we once knew it. It is a matter of light and of burst form, she says. Matter is not what it used to be. For Fogelklou, neither physical form nor the formalities of the past are what they used to be. They are material and actual, but not static.[16]

As physical matter is discovered to be radiant, so is form—in the wider Fogelklouian sense—revealed to be radiant.

She finds this second transformation reflected in the contemporary art world, in which art strives to reach beyond representation. In contemporary art, radiant matter transgresses the medieval and divine as a centred light source without which the world would not only be dark but cease to exist. It also transgresses human "enlightenment," the "showing-light" that casts shadows only wherever the human line of sight is hindered by matter. Matter, form itself, is no longer infused by a shining divine concrete stability, nor defined and distantly viewed by a transcendent subject.[17] On the contrary, it is characterized by change and vibrancy, she says. This new expression of matter, then—to speak with Foucault—moves beyond the simple choice between the medieval God and the modern Subject.

In this "post-representational" time, Fogelklou also proclaims a spiritual task for contemporary man: to flee submission as obedience in order to dive into form as liberated from its former formality.[18] Nothing past can dictate the conduct of the individual, she states. Inherited forms cannot dictate, not exercise power over the present, since presence in the present is a presence in transgression.[19] To be present in the world in this manner is to be in, and part of, living form—radiant form. Fogelklou therefore offers not a return to lost authoritative structures, nor a neglect of the forms of this inheritance, but an entry in the present into these inherited forms. The presence in the here and now, as a transgressive presence of the infinitely new is, then, dependent on the repetition of forms.

In 1963, a year after the death of Georges Bataille—the same year Foucault wrote his "Preface to Transgression"—Fogelklou wrote an essay on Bataille who, by then, had become increasingly important to her thinking. The essay is an introduction to his writing but also to Fogelklou herself. In this article, Fogelklou argues that if the individual strives beyond herself as a static subject through constant transgression, and enters the multiplicity of the present, then she may also encounter the contingency and potentiality of anything that comes to the fore as static, as given, as heavy inheritance or as concrete hard, solid rock.[20]

Beyond common sense

Fogelklou was an important voice in the history of the struggle for women's rights in Sweden. The women's movement fought for the right to formal positions in society. It was a striving that aimed for identity. In short, it was a striving for women's right to "form." Fogelklou herself, however, seems to have been fighting a different battle for a different kind of freedom. She fought for the right *not* to be limited to the idea of static identity. She fought "form" in the official sense in order to make room for an idea of a form of force, *a form of radiance*.

It seems that Fogelklou knows she cannot speak of radiance without using inherited forms, but on the other hand, she is aware that the forms may at anytime conceal and restrain the radiant reality she wishes to articulate. In consequence, she speaks and unspeaks, she encounters form affirmatively yet negatively, and for this reason she also refuses official church ordination. An institutionalized office would be, she says, like "putting a hood on" the discovery of reality as radiant form. It would be to ignore the insight that reality and its formalities are infused by an immanent force. In other words, official ordinations conserve the habitual account of form as stable and final—it tends to mistake static form for radiance.[21]

Early in life, Fogelklou had a key experience—the discovery of reality—that informed, inspired and haunted all of her work from then onwards. It gave her a conviction of the divine as radically immanent. She persistently describes her discovery as that of *reality,* and only secondarily as an insight into God, through "the most real."[22] In 1958, while Fogelklou was still an important voice in the cultural debate and especially in women issues, the Church of Sweden decided to open its ministry for women. Naturally, the question of women's ordination had been debated and fought for by women with any interest of the women's cause (and particularly by those with a theological interest) for at least half a decade before the decision was finally taken. In consequence, questions were raised among her fellow feminists as to why Fogelklou herself never aspired for ordination. In a letter to her friend and comrade in arms for the women's cause, Lydia Wahlström, written 17 November 1916, she emphasizes and explains her unwillingness regarding church

ordination. The most deeply religious never become ministers, she argues, since it opposes a truly and deeply religious relation to reality and to others. She quotes one of the first Quakers, Kagawa: "It is utterly impossible for me to have a sincere respect for professionalized religious leaders. Religion is the greatest of all arts. What generally goes by the name of art is fragmentary and appeals only to the senses. Religion alone is the art of life itself."

In consequence, with every thinker and thought she introduces, Fogelklou seems to aim for transgression of the current assumptions.[23] As Björk's reaction above illuminates, Fogelklou's texts are at times enigmatic encounters of "form" and "radiance" as different expressions of life and contemporary culture, in which these notions are interchangeable yet somehow distinct. In a discussion on the form of poetry, Fogelklou also indicates that the very distinction between *this* and *that*—the ground for representational identity, to speak with the terminology of this book—is the very motion that creates the difference between form and radiance. As long as we assume a representational logic, this difference will appear distinct. This formal distinction, however, can be broken through by an inner factor, Fogelklou says, an inner factor, an immanent force, that transgresses simple divisions between this and that. Writer and member of the Swedish Academy Birgitta Trotzig describes the distinct yet transgressive relation between form and radiance in Fogelklou. She quotes Fogelklou in a discussion on poetry as "simply form" versus poetry as prayer, or "radiance": "The very distinction is vertical. It is the beam, the radiance (. . .) the passing-through-the-limit that makes the entire dissimilarity. From the outside, this difference might appear sharply distinct, as a difference in form worth, style or art of culture, but it can be broken through by an entirely *inner* factor, 'sensed easier than explained.'" [24] According to Trotzig, Fogelklou introduces a world "where borders are crushed, where the law never existed—where every thing and every image can become an intermediary of presence, sacrament." However, reading Fogelklou's passage again, and letting it ring of Foucault on Bataille, we note that Fogelklou does not do away with the limit. Quite the opposite, in fact. *The distinction* in this passage is itself radiance.[25]

Consciously or not, it seems to me that Fogelklou treats the theological realm as a realm for thought that demands a certain approach to language if its inherited truths are ever to be transgressed. I believe she is writing to make meaning negatively open up towards that which is beyond the current common sense, the current form. Fogelklou aims to make the radiance of form negatively stand forth, in order to remind the reader that things can always be otherwise. To that extent, I find Fogelklou's weakness in the eyes of secular common sense, which Björk expresses above, the very strength of her spirituality.

Thus understood, Fogelklou may in fact open a theological and spiritual opportunity that comes closer to the strange murmur of Foucault's school teacher than to either the negative or the creatively affirmative theological expressions discussed above. It is a repetition of phantasms, a transgressive repetition that acknowledges the force embedded in a playful repetition of what comes to the fore as solid and eternal in order to show that every limit, every formal repetition, indicates transgression.[26] The inherited forms are phantasmic and indicate transgression since they point beyond the very idea of an eternal form, towards the radiant and creative reality of which they consist.

Consequently, I believe there is a connection between the poststructuralist thinkers and Emilia Fogelklou. Moreover, while the theological potential of the post-representational perspective is sensed in Foucault and Deleuze, it is explicit and acted out in Fogelklou. In his essay on Maurice Blanchot, Foucault discusses the notion of "I speak" as opposed to the Cartesian *cogito,* "I think." Language could recapture itself in the singular form "I speak," says Foucault, if this "I speak" is considered "an absolute opening through which language endlessly spreads forth, while the subject—the "I" who speaks—fragments, dissperses, scatters, disappearing in that naked space."[27] In Fogelklou, this dispersion of the self, the constant disappearence of the "I" who speaks, becomes a spiritual imperative that affects her account of philosophy, but also her way of living in post-war Europe.

8

Conclusions

In the introduction, I described an episode from a confirmation camp. A young Jewish sailor made me as a minister understand how my attempts at being nice, at embracing differences and open up to diversity, turned into a universalistic gesture. My attempt to include difference left no room for the truly different, it left no way out of the Christian story.

The analyses above have all dealt with different aspects of that very dilemma. I guess one could say I have noted how different Christian attempts at being nice have turned out not so nice in the end, and I have explored ways of doing differently. By help from Foucault and Deleuze, I have realized that when I asked the confirmands to reinterpret the Christian credo I merely asked them to produce commentaries that would finally serve to elevate the original. Moreover, when letting their believes serve as commentaries to the Christian credo I not only boosted the credo with their faiths but I also unabled their faiths to truly break with the truths expressed in the Christian credo. Possibly, if I simply would have repeated the credo, as if handing over an eternal truth, that would have enabled the confirmands to be more critical and thus more free in relation to what they heard. The repetition of the credo could have served as a revelation of difference in itself. It could have depicted how truths grow old and even at times irrelevant, how time changes, how nothing remains the same and how every situation creates new truths, and new truths out of the old.

While I got a wake-up-call from a sailor, Foucault and Deleuze got a wake-up-call from an artist, namely the provocative writer and artist Pierre Klossowski. In fact, one way to describe the connections between the different Deleuzian and Foucauldian perspectives introduced and used in this book is to say that they all come together in Klossowski.

When Foucault describes his relation to Klossowski's writing, he underlines the importance of Klossowski's notion of language as simulacrum and phantasm as a point where many of Foucault's own ideas merge. According to Foucault, *the murmur* in Blanchot and the transgressive *desacralisation of language* in Bataille are both forms of transgression that, in turn, come together in Klossowski's account of *language as phantasm and simulacrum*.[1] The idea of a constant transgression in Bataille and the idea of a murmur that cannot be fully articulated in Blanchot both oppose and transcend the notion of a representational language. These ideas, in turn, are both inherent to Klossowski's notion of language as simulacrum and phantasm, since this notion places language far beyond the logic according to which a limit is final, and in which there is an exterior reality for language to articulate.

The influence of Klossowski is also, as noted, a point where Foucault and Deleuze meet. Many key Deleuzian concepts come from Klossowski's reading of Nietzsche. This mutual meeting point might also possibly explain why the two, Foucault and Deleuze, are intermingled in the way they are in this book.

But whether Klossowski is a meeting point or not, the ideas discussed above all relate to each other. The notion of a transgressive repetition of phantasms discussed in the former chapter relates to the preceding analyses. For instance, according to the reasoning in chapter 5, the infinitive form has a phantasmic function in our language and thus in our world. Our repetition of the infinitives is a *repetition of phantasms* since it constantly enables the transgression of our former account of what the infinitives represent.

This movement, in turn, is similar to that of the commentator Ward himself when he appears as a phantasm in his own text. Ward the commentator appears phantasmic because his reasoning is at odds with his own position. There is no room for him in the text in which he nonetheless appears as commentator, hence he can appear as simultaneously present and real *and* impossible and somehow imaginary—in other words, phantasmic.

The repetition of phantasms also relates to the repetition of absolutes, the oracular voice and the metaphysical presence in Altizer. I argue that

Altizer repeats his truths until they are emptied, made unreliable as the kind of truth claims that build on a logic in which a statement refers to an absent and stable reality. At the point where the text becomes unreliable, as a reader, one either closes his books and moves on to something more substantial or one continues to read until the truth claims dissolve the dialectical and representational idea of what a truth really is. If one continues, I have argued, one may encounter a new kind of immanent metaphysics: a singular voice and a playful repetition on an immanent plane that knows of no final distinctions between the sacred and the profane, nor of what makes sense and what is nonsense, nor of what is *kairos* and what is *chronos,* since all has become equally actual and productive.

With this brief recapitulation I now move on to discuss the implications this move beyond representation may have for the pursuit of academic theology.

Theological self-critique

In the introduction, I also noted that contemporary political philosophers like Slavoj Žižek, Giorgio Agamben, Alain Badiou and others have shown a growing interest in Christian sources. Thinkers in what were formerly considered radically atheist realms of thought have turned to Christianity for inspiration. I also noted that this increased interest in Christianity has brought problematic aspects of Christian thinking to light. Theologians who have read these political writings on Christianity have claimed critically, for instance, that they reintroduce an old Christian distinction between exclusivism and inclusivism—a distinction in which the exclusivism is generally regarded as "Jewish" and negative, while the inclusivism is considered "Christian" and positive. In other words, the emergent interest in Christianity seems to call for theologically informed and critical examinations of Christian thought. There appears to be a need for Christian self-critique and perhaps even recourse to devoutly non-Christian perspectives on theology. In fact, the political philosophers' interest in theology motivated me as a theologian to enact a theological examination of devoutly non-Christian philosophical perspectives.

Although recent theology has paid considerable attention to philosophical resources in order to break free of the predicaments of its own inheritance, I suggest in this book that there are certain perspectives that have not been fully explored theologically. Neither theologians with more confessional aims nor theologians leaning towards secular and critical approaches have paid considerable attention to what I call the post-representational contributions to philosophy. The post-representational aspects of Foucault's and Deleuze's thinking have only rarely been discussed in theology, despite the fact that they appear to offer new entrances to the problem of a one exclusive truth as opposed to an all-embracing universal inclusivism; as well as to the opposition between a sacred-commentary approach versus a secular-critical approach. I wanted therefore to explore the possibilities embedded in a post-representational approach to theology, which I did in four experimental chapters that enacted encounters between contemporary theology and post-representational perspectives.

Theological encounters

In chapter 3, I invited British Radical Orthodox theologian Graham Ward to meet with Foucault, especially Foucault's notions of commentary versus critique. I argued that in his *Christ and Culture,* Ward introduced himself as a "commentator" pretty much precisely in the way that Foucault had described the function of the commentary. I found, however, that Ward's reading of the Gospel of Mark completely disabled the commentator function. In Ward's reading, the author of Mark made sure to break down any authority and leave only a reciprocality, a relational pattern of conversion, of readership and listening in which the disciple was to dwell infinitely. Suddenly, then, the commentator himself, Ward, started to appear rather phantasmic. If not even the author of Mark could leave the narrative and guide his readers from an exterior point of view, how could Ward? Ward the commentator was simply undermined by his own commentary which, in turn, made the commentator as well as his commentary rather insecure. Instead of pointing towards a true

understanding of Mark, these two together, the commentator and his commentary, depicted that there are no final authorities or final narratives.

I tried to show, then, that there are actualities in Ward's text, actual presences that produce and create truths, at times even at odds with the author's intention. The post-representational approach, I believe, illuminated these "incorporeal materialities," the actual truths that the text produced, as well as some of their force and effect.

In the next analysis, I approached the problem of inclusivism versus exclusivism through two examples of Deleuzian endeavours in theology. I used Catherine Keller as an example of how Deleuze has been brought into a Christian pattern of representation through a striving for inclusivism. Ward, on the other hand, was used as an example of how Deleuzian thought has been brought into representation through an (at least partly accidental) exclusivism. If one aspires to break free from thought structures that reproduce universal claims by bringing every difference into a chaotic yet (unintentionally) preserved singular divinity—or more plainly, that repeat *the one Christian truth* in different guises—neither Ward's nor Keller's theological attempts seem to offer a solution. In accordance with Foucault's reading of Deleuze, in fact, these examples illustrate what Foucault regarded as misunderstandings of the Deleuzian account of difference and repetition. Foucault relates these misunderstandings to the notions of "becoming" and "return" respectively.

Foucault, instead, enhances the Deleuzian notion of the repetition of phantasms. In a complete turnover of phenomenology, in Foucault's view, Deleuze lets the givens—what we habitually regard as truths—stand forth as phantasms. The truths are *actual,* we live with them, they affect our lives, our thoughts and bodies, and to that extent they are productive, but they are also creative and changeable. In short, they are phantasmic. According to Foucault, the ambition to come closer to the complexity of reality by introducing new notions that are imagined to capture reality more accurately will only reproduce the idea that there actually is a "one true way" to represent and a "one true reality" to represent. Striving for more accurate representations will not finally make room for that which lies beyond what we already accept as real,

true and rational. To view representations of reality as phantasms, on the other hand, may generate an awareness of those realities that tend to escape our eyes and ears—and our language.

In consequence, Ward's accidental creation of a phantasmic authority proved more forceful when it came to questioning the conviction of a singular Christian truth than did his Deleuze-inspired image of Christ as "schizo." The representational logic according to which there is always a truer external reality to represent in the present was overthrown and even made irrelevant when the representations themselves stood forth as playful realities, as phantasmic actualities.

In chapter 5, I suggested that North American radical theologian Thomas J. J. Altizer is perhaps not simply stuck in repetition, as some have argued. Altizer's repetition of God, in my reading, enacts a kind of release of God, of identity and of the absolutes as "phantasms." Altizer's Godhead, I have argued, finally stands forth as a text-immanent expression of transcendence. If understood through a post-representational perspective, Altizer's incessant repetition of absolutes has a subversive function in his writing. His repetitions empty the God notion of meaning until this enables a kind of repetition of difference indicated by the very repetition of the death of God.

In consequence, a post-representational understanding could actually embrace Altizer's metaphysical claims and his metaphysical outset rather than suggest he should leave metaphysics behind. From such a perspective, Altizer's theology could certainly be said to offer a mythical explanation of salvation history—a Grand Narrative of Christian redemption—just as John D. Caputo claims in his critique of Altizer. When Altizer is read post-representationally, however, this myth is not only inverted but the very idea of myth, of final meaning, is made insecure through the very repetition of that myth. What stands forth in Altizer's life-long production is not simply an inverted myth of Christianity but, as Mark C. Taylor has noted, an obsessive repetition of Christian phantasms. Through repetition of the metaphysical absolutes—God and Satan, life and death—Altizer, I argue, actually empties them of their representational function and re-creates them as phantasms.

The fourth analysis develops further the idea of repetition as repetition of difference. I broach this in relation to Foucault and the repetition of

phantasms. My argument opposes Bernauer's claim that Foucault is essentially a negative theologian by outlining what I regard as a negative motion in Foucault. Through Foucault's essay on the Belgian artist Réne Magritte, I depict how Foucault sided with Magritte's negative rather than Kandinsky's affirmative break with representation. The negative in Magritte was in my view very far from an *apophatic* theological account. What Foucault saw in Kandinsky's affirmation was the risk embedded in affirmative creation of the new; namely, that a new creation soon becomes as stifling and absolute as the one it replaces. Magritte's negative endeavour, on the other hand, does not strive to preserve the notion of an ever-enigmatic outer reality, as a negative theological endeavour might. Quite the opposite; and yet he seems to have realized that representation will never quite go away. The idea of a "truer reality" beyond the present will linger on—in art perception, just as it does in theology, no matter how profoundly contemporary theologians try to rethink it. Through Magritte, Foucault suggests that a playful repetition of representation might actually help this very thought structure liberate us rather than limit us, for the limit always indicates the possibility of transgression. Interestingly, Swedish theologian Emilia Fogelklou had come to a similar conclusion, though with more direct consequences for spiritual life. She, in turn, left us with what I regard as a kind of post-representational theology.

In sum, I did find that post-representational perspectives brought something new to the theologies studied. I believe the perspectives I have introduced through Deleuze and Foucault illuminate aspects of the theologies studied that have not quite been noted before. I also find that they indicate ways beyond at least a simplistic opposition between exclusivism and inclusivism, and between a confessional approach versus a critical approach. Possibly, then, my post-representational exploration could contribute new perspectives on theology as an academic practice in a more general sense as well. Let me offer a few suggestions.

Broken theology

Swedish theologian Mattias Martinson describes contemporary theology as "post-Christian." To Martinson this twofold word has a

twofold and even *broken* meaning. Theology in our time, he argues, is post-*Christian* to the extent that it is still in historical contact with its *credo,* its confessional logic. This means that theology is still a Christian practice that revolves around faith, in this sense, in the Christian notion of God. However, contemporary theology is also unavoidably *post*-Christian to the extent that it is just as soaked in the *cogito:* that is, in secular logic. Expressed in Martinson's own words: "Theology is post-*Christian* and in contact with its old *credo* logic and practice. But it is just as much *post*-Christian, and conditional on the *cogito* logic and *cogito* practice that blocks the return of the *credo*."[2]

One could say, then, to speak with Foucault, that contemporary theology stands on the one hand in the commentary tradition, yet on the other hand, at the very same time, in the tradition of critique. Contemporary theology approaches its inherited texts as a commentator who aims to lay bare its inherent truth, *and*—at the very same time—as a critic who approaches language as a pure function disconnected from any notion of an intrinsic truth, but who still "cannot fail to question it as to its truth or falsehood, its transparency or opacity."[3] The contemporary landscape of theology simultaneously critically judges *and* respectfully elevates its Christian inheritance.

In Martinson's view, this cracked "identity" of a discontinuous and profoundly broken theology could activate it to engage in theological critique of both the secular *and* the sacred. Not, however, in statements of certainty, but in experimental and tentative contributions to contemporary thought. Thus understood, theology could serve as a cracked "third" voice; a mumbling voice that would strive to explore and experiment with contemporary use and misuse of *credo* and *cogito* alike. A theological task would then be to "recognize and use the Christian theological tradition, also in its dissolution."[4] Thus understood—as a self-reflection over a cracked post-Christian culture—theology becomes, in Martinson's words, "broken and discontinuous."[5]

However, this split voice would also, in Martinson's view, strive beyond theology as *talk about God* to the extent that such talk is understood as talk of a particular truth. In his *Perseverance without Doctrine,* Martinson writes that "theology has ceased (and if it has not, it *should* cease) to centre itself on *the* problem of God."[6] Contemporary

theology, he says, has lost *the* God-problem—the God-problem, that is, understood as a defined and shared problem—and if it has not, then it should.

Now, I believe that the post-representational thinking that I explore in this book points in a similar though somewhat modified direction than Martinson's. This post-representational approach also differs from, for instance, the analogical a/theological path in Taylor and Caputo.

In the introduction I quoted Caputo saying, through Derrida, that we should beware of theology since wherever it appears it deals with "the fixed centre." Caputo himself claims he wants to move beyond the fixed centre, and thus beyond any such account of theology and into a Derridean a/theology. My post-representational approach points in a slightly different direction. The analyses above do not suggest theology should leave the fixed centre behind, but rather that we "let it loose" as multiplicity, as a *singular* rather than a *particular* God-talk. In that sense, the post-representational perspective could actually indicate a return to the account of theology as *talk about God,* or even more to the point, as *God-talk*. However, through the post-representational—and therefore also post-Christian—perspective, the *God-talk* is no longer particular or referring to *the* God-problem but is multiple and to some extent always phantasmic.

Talk about God

In line with this reasoning, I do believe that the God concept is somehow at the centre of the present work (as a *theological* contribution), but that this "God" is multiple. In my discussions above, the God concept appears as one phantasmic function among many, and as such it becomes comparable to, for example, the infinitive of "to read," to the manic repetitions in Altizer, and even to the author's voice created in Ward's *Christ and Culture.* In other words, it has moved pretty far from the one Christian almighty and compassionate transcendence. Still, my experimental readings support Caputo's claim that theology does deal with the fixed centre. How to handle, to understand, to renegotiate, to approach or to do away with the Christian notion of God could

very well be described as a key drive of the theologies discussed here. My approach does not support Caputo's rejection of theology on this ground, however; quite the contrary.

Contrary to Caputo, and modifying Martinson's vision, I believe that contemporary theology would be better off recognizing itself as *God-talk* instead of trying to leave this focus behind. Theology should not leave its "fixed centre" (Caputo) or its "God-problem" (Martinson) behind, but acknowledge and make use of its presence at the heart of theology. It could make creative use of the fact that its *credo* of the one God is present—which I believe it is—alongside the *cogito* logic, or logic of criticism, in contemporary theology.

In this book, I have explored theology as a discourse of representation—a discourse structured around the idea of a reality (present, absent or present/absent) to be represented—and I have experimented with the possibilities of moving beyond this discursive formation. This endeavor has indicated that viewing theology as a discourse of representation makes sense; Deleuze and Foucault do have a point when they describe Christian thinking critically as basically representational. In the end, however, I let Foucault suggest that a play with representation may offer a kind of immanent escape from the representational discourse simply because we probably will never be able to leave it anyway; neither through an endless presence/absence nor through an ongoing affirmative creation. I myself humbly added that this might be especially true for theology as a representational discourse, and thus I introduced Fogelklou, who has explored this further.

Even if theology today is post-Christian, it still remains post-*Christian;* it also carries a representational *credo* logic. In fact, I find the reactions to theologians like Caputo and Ward, both of whom have worked with Derrida, an illustrative example of this theological condition. Both are painstaking, well read and thorough in their introductions of Derridean thought into theological discourse. Yet they have to keep explaining that to them, as theologians, Derrida's *différance* does *not* necessarily equal God.[7] In the introduction I quoted Daniel W. Smith, who suggested that Derrida is essentially "orthodox," which is why these pious expectations in theological readings of Derrida

might come as no surprise. Still, however, Smith's understanding of Derrida as orthodox does not automatically explain why readers of theology tend to equate his *différance* with God. One pretty obvious (and traditional) explanation could be that the recurrent structuring question for philosophy is the question of *thinking as such,* whereas the question structuring contemporary theology is not primarily "What is theology?" (that is, what characterizes theological thought and practice?), but rather "What is God?"

If the question of God is somehow—whether we like it or not, and whether theology aims to rupture this centre or to preserve it—still a structuring principle for theology, then theology will also be a discipline inclined to resurrect God over and over again. This could explain why the Derridian *différance* has to do with thinking and knowing as long as it stays out of theology, but as soon as it enters, so does the need for philosophical safety measures. Reading Derrida's *différance* from an implicitly structuring question of "What is God?" inevitably evokes the need for clarification in order not to subsume this philosophical notion under the theological quest. Which in turn provokes Ward to underline in the preface to the second edition of his book on Barth and Derrida: "But, and this is the important but, God is not *différance* for Derrida."[8]

The very same notion—that theology revolves around *an object to represent* rather than *an activity to understand*—could also explain why the Deleuzian concepts (discussed in chapter 5) tend to support representation as soon as they are brought into theological discourse. If this distinction still does capture a difference between theology and philosophy, then the two discourses need to approach their metaphysical inheritance in different ways. When Deleuze and Guattari answer the question what philosophy is by saying that the task of philosophy is to create concepts in an affirmative creative activity, they readily do away with the "iron collars" of metaphysical philosophy as well as with the judgement of God within their explorations of *thinking as such.* The *activity* of philosophy, of thinking, thus understood, does away with the *objects* of past activities.

If the task of creating concepts were made a task for theology, however (which would not be in line with Deleuze's and Guattari's reasoning), every concept presented would be considered an answer to

the overarching question "What is God?" and thus, willingly or not, subsumed into the search for the identity of the theological object. Regardless of how "eternally changing," "fluid," "schizoid" or "tehomic" God might be perceived or described to be, the object-focus as such, the search for God, still persists. This in turn explains why a painting by Kandinsky should not be hanging above an altar if it wants to stay out of the game of representation.

Still, however, the borders are blurred in the contemporary landscape of theology and philosophy. As Martinson notes, theology today is as soaked in the *cogito* logic as it is in the *credo* logic. The question of God is at the theological centre, but today so is the question of thinking and knowing. Let us consider Ward's notion of the "*metanoia,*" for example. Does not this very idea place the philosophical questions, "what is thinking and knowing?," "what are the limits for thought?," at the centre of contemporary theology?[9] Bruce McCormack supports such a reading when he argues that Ward, despite his confessional striving, misunderstands Barth. Ward's God-concept is, in McCormack's view, tailored to the requirements of linguistic theory, which makes him overlook Barth's elevation of "the particularity of the divine action in which God alone is truly God." In other words, Ward is more coloured by non-Christian philosophy than he wants to be.

Moreover, what I described as the "postmodern vigilance" in Ward—the demand for constant intellectual repentence—is that not the philosophical quest made sacred? In Ward, the unending questioning and thinking of postmodern philosophy is even made into *the* Christian calling. In that sense, Carl Raschke might be right to claim that no matter how Ward tries to bring God back in, "Ward cannot say à-*Dieu* anymore than Derrida himself."[10]

Caputo suggests through Derrida that theology, the "fixed centre," lures in metaphysics, even metaphysics that professes to be atheist. Conversely too, however, perhaps "the question of thinking" may at times lure in a philosophically inspired body of thought, even when it professes to be theist?

Perhaps contemporary theology is *post*-Christian, even when it aims to return to its Christian foundation. If that is so, one could suspect that at times philosophical prejudices haunt theology. One could

suspect that philosophical presuppositions put up limits for theological knowledge and introduce square categories for thought from the philosophical inheritance. The *cogito* might structure and organize Christian thought in ways that are not necessarily liberating. True, it may in effect tame the kind of theological irrationality that, from a secular point of view, preserves obsolete ideas stemming from a notion of divine revelation, which was absurd in the first place. In other words, the *cogito*-logic might rid theology of its phantasms, its nonsensical actualities. However, as we have seen, from a post-representational perspective these actualities are precisely what allows for change, for diversity and for unknown realities. Perhaps, then, there is reason for theology to nurse its dogmatic and metaphysical inheritance, critically yet tenderly. Rather than leave the fixed centre or the God-problem behind, there might be reason to disobediently acknowledge and repeat this centre.

God is back, globally and politically, but also in academic theology. Let us ask whether theology might just as well open its academic eyes to this presence and "let it loose" through different forms of disobedient repetition, as a playful intellectual and even political undertaking? The very "talk about God" as a repetition of a phantasm could offer an escape from common sense by giving shelter to the timid creatures of *non*-sense—that which is nonsensical simply because we have no category in which to place it, the strange murmur that is not part of what we already know.

When Foucault describes the logic of representation as a choice between commentary and critique, he finally asks for another way forward. Foucault does not settle for an indecisive oscillation between *credo* and *cogito,* commentary and critique, but suggests a playful and disobedient repetition of both of these inheritances. As I quoted him above, "until the connection between language and representation is broken, or at least transcended, in our culture, all secondary languages will be imprisoned within the alternative of criticism or commentary. And in their indecision they will proliferate *ad infinitum*."

Hopefully my analyses in chapters 3 through 6 have given some indication of what this could entail in concrete encounters with theology. The implications of a post-representational account of theology, as we

have seen, could reach further than technical methodology. It could also reach back into the history of Swedish theology as suggested in chapter 6. Fogelklou introduces a mysterious and evasive couple of concepts: "radiance" and "form." Through this dynamic duo she transfigures the account of form to serve radiant becoming rather than shadowy stability—form understood as any expression of fixed matter or formality.

Martinson's post-Christian theological vision differs markedly from Fogelklou's spiritual undertaking. Like Fogelklou, however, Martinson's vision takes its outset in a weakened Christianity whose "forms" have lost their former weight and meaningfulness; also like Fogelklou, Martinson makes active use of this outset. His vision implies a theology whose Christian identity has become so weakened and thin that it may work as a genuinely liberating interpretative tool—rather than a truth—for contemporary Christian cultures.[11]

Charles Winquist, whose desiring theology was cited in the introduction, also finds an escape through the enfeebled position of the Christianity of his time. Winquist views theological language as a subversive contemporary language precisely *because* it is weakened as truth while it still holds on to its phantasmic expressions. In Winquist's words, inspired by Deleuze: theology is a minor intensive use of language that pressures the ordinary weave of discourse and opens it to desire beyond disappointment.

According to the post-representational account sketched here, then, contemporary theology should perhaps not leave metaphysics behind but understand its task differently. In this account, inherited Christian dogma is considered actual (just like Magritte's pipe on the wall) and as affecting our world in reality—our account of meaning as well as our bodies, actions and politics—yet it is actual and real because it is repeated as such and used as such. A post-representational theology would note the force of form—dogma, truths, authorities, eternal gestures and church buildings—but it would not believe in their final power. It would believe in representation, in its effects and its force, but it would also believe in the possibility of moving beyond its expressions, while also believing that expression already moves beyond representation; thus, it would constitute a *post-representation*. It would be a theology dealing with its own phantasms.

At best, then, a post-representational account could open up a playful yet serious form of post-Christian resistance. To repeat, parody and play with whatever comes to the fore as eternal, or as the truth of concrete experience—when reading and doing theology—in order to make room negatively for those realities, actual but unknown, unthinkable yet possible, that no language could ever capture.

Notes

Notes to chapter 1

1. Dorothee Sölle, *Christ the Representative: An Essay in Theology After the Death of God* (SCM Press, 1967); German edition, *Stellvertretung. Ein Kapitel Theologie nach dem 'Tode Gottes'* (Stuttgart: Kreuz-Verlag, 1965). Note the specific meaning of the German word *Stellvertretung*, which literally means to stand instead of someone else, for someone else.

2. Sölle, *Christ the Representative*, 148; *Stellvertretung*, 200.

3. Sölle, *Christ the representative*, 141; *Stellvertretung*, 191.

4. Clayton Crockett, introduction to *Secular Theology: American Radical Theological Thought*, ed. Crockett Clayton (Routledge, 2001), 3.

5. Crockett, *Secular Theology*, 3.

6. Hyman, Gavin, *The Predicament of Postmodern Theology: Radical Orthodoxy or Nihilist Textualism*? (Westminster/John Knox, 2001), 4.

7. Frederik Christian Bauerschmidt, "Aesthetics: The Theological Sublime", in *Radical Orthodoxy: A New Theology*, ed. John Milbank, Catherine Pickstock and Graham Ward (Routledge, 1999), 201–19, quote on 205.

8. Bauerschmidt, "Aesthetics", 211.

9. Ibid.

10. The three did not form a self-conscious group; in different ways, however, they did all respond to the twentieth-century traditions of phenomenology and structuralism. Phenomenology, at the time mainly associated with Edmund Husserl (1859–1938) and Martin Heidegger (1889–1976), strove to examine life just as it appears, as phenomena. Structuralism, often associated with the linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913) attempted a rigorous study of social systems and languages. Both movements questioned the presupposed connection between knowledge and the knowing subject. For phenomenology, instead, the foundation for knowledge was experience itself, without presuppositions as to who or what was *doing* the experience, who or what was the subject of the experience. Structuralism, insisted that meaning is determined *in relation* to other components of a system—the structure of concepts, language or signs. As opposed to these two traditions, what characterizes the post-structuralists (as an involuntary group), is that they all recognized the impossibility of founding knowledge on either pure experience, as in phenomenology, or in systematic structures, as in structuralism. Furthermore, they all welcomed and praised this impossibility of knowledge

foundations. See Claire Colebrook, *Gilles Deleuze* (Routledge, 2007), 1–2; this introduction to Deleuzian thought borders on simplification and thus requires additional reading, as the author herself is the first to admit. Daniel W. Smith underlines, for instance, that Deleuze does not reject Heideggerian thought but rather develops it; Daniel W. Smith, "Deleuze and Derrida, Immanence and Transcendence: Two Directions in Recent French Thought", in *Between Deleuze and Derrida*, ed. Paul Patton and John Protevi (Continuum, 2004), 48.

11. Mark C. Taylor, *Erring: A Postmodern A/Theology* (University of Chicago Press, 1987), 48.

12. Taylor, *Erring*, 48.

13. Bruce McCormack discusses Ward's reading of Barth and underlines its outset in the crisis of representation, to which Ward, through Derrida, draws different conclusions than, for instance, Walter Benjamin. McCormack argues that the crisis of representation—the insight that language cannot fully capture reality—leads Benjamin to conclude: "All language communicates is itself". Barth in Ward's reading, on the other hand, reacts to the same crisis by simultaneously assuming the necessity and the impossibility of representation. While Benjamin ends up in a self-communicating language, Ward's Barth ends up in a deconstructive account of the Word of God as simultaneously in and beyond representation, McCormack claims. See Bruce L. McCormack, *Modern and Orthodox: Studies in the Theologies of Karl Barth* (Baker Academic, 2008), 148.

14. Ward, *Barth, Derrida and the Language of Theology* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), 237.

15. Ward, *Barth, Derrida*, 245.

16. Ward, "Questioning God", in *Questioning God*, ed. John D. Caputo, Mark Dooley, and Michael J. Scanlon (Indiana University Press, 2001), 286.

17. Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* [1967], trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 6; passage quoted by John D. Caputo in "Atheism, A/theology and the Postmodern Condition", *The Cambridge Companion to Atheism,* ed. Michael Martin (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 267.

18. Caputo, "Atheism, A/theology", 267.

19. Two titles from Caputo's earlier production, and two from his later, give a good indication of his theological venture: John D. Caputo, *Heidegger and Aquinas: An Essay on Overcoming Metaphysics* (1982), *Radical Hermeneutics: Repetition, Deconstruction and the Hermeneutic Project* (1987), *Transcendence and Beyond: A Postmodern Inquiry,* with Michael J. Scanlon, (2007), *What Would Jesus Deconstruct? The Good News of Postmodernism for the Church* (2007).

20. Jeffrey W. Robbins and Christopher D. Rodkey, "Radical Theology and the New Atheism", in *Religion and the New Atheism: A Critical Appraisal*, ed. Amarnath Amarasingam (Brill, 2010). Daniel W. Smith, "The Doctrine of Univocity: Deleuze's Ontology of Immanence", in *Deleuze and Religion,* ed. Mary Bryden (Routledge, 2001), 174.

21. Smith, "Doctrine of Univocity", 174.

22. According to Smith, "Deleuze and Derrida, 46.

23. Taylor, *Erring*, 48.

24. Smith, "Deleuze and Derrida", 54.

25. Smith, "Doctrine of Univocity", 174.

26. According to Smith, ibid. See Deleuze, "Les plages d'immanence", in *L'art des confins: Mélanges offerts à Maurice de Gandillac*, ed. Annie Cazenave and Jean-Francois Lyotard (Presses Universitaires de France, 1985), 79.

27. Philip Goodchild, *Deleuze and Guattari: An Introduction to the Politics of Desire* (Sage, 1996), 117.

28. Mary Bryden, ed., *Deleuze and Religion* (Routledge, 2001). Kristien Justaert, "Gilles Deleuze and the Transcendence of the Immanent", in *Culture and Transcendence: A Typology of Transcendence,* ed. Wessel Stoker and W. L. van der Merwe (Peeters, 2012), 93–104. Theological interest in Deleuze has grown notably during the period I have been engaged in the present work. British theologian Philip Goodchild had written extensively on Deleuze, but did not primarily write from a theological standpoint, though he did address and discuss Deleuze theologically in articles. The first two extensive works that explicitly examine the relationship between Deleuze and theology are published in 2012: *Theology after Deleuze* by Kristien Justaert (Continuum, 2012) and *Deleuze and Theology* by Christopher Ben Simpson (Continuum, 2012). Justaert underlines that "Deleuze's relationship with theology is a complex one", which is why there seemingly are many reasons to object to the constellation of Deleuze and theology as such. As we shall note below, however (and as Justaert fully elaborates), Deleuze's interest in and relevance for theology is greater than it might first appear. (Thank you, Kristien and Christopher, for sharing portions of your work with me before it was published.)

29. Catherine Dale, "Knowing One's Enemy: Deleuze, Artaud, and the Problem of Judgment", in *Deleuze and Religion*, ed. Brydon, 133.

30. Dale, "Knowing One's Enemy", 134.

31. Dale, "Knowing One's Enemy", 135.

32. Oliver Davies' essay "Thinking Difference: A Comparative Study of Gilles Deleuze, Plotinos and Meister Eckhart" (in *Deleuze and Religion*, ed. Bryden, 76–86) sketches Deleuze's critique of representation as a critique

of Christian analogical thinking. Rather than opposing it to the Christian thought structure of Plotinos and Meister Eckhart, however—as does Daniel Smith in his contribution to the same volume (Smith, "Doctrine of Univocity", 167–183), Davies suggests a path beyond representation embedded even in the mystique inheritance of Eckhart and Plotinos.

33. Charles E. Winquist's *Desiring Theology* (1995) takes its outset in the postmodern secular milieu and finds, through Deleuze, an affirmative path beyond negation. Thought in the postmodern secular milieu, Winquist argues, is characterized by disappointment. Secular postmodern thought exemplifies postmodern insight into the complexity and incapacity of human endeavours to think the world. According to Winquist, however, "there is still a desire for a thinking that does not disappoint" (Charles E. Winquist, *Desiring Theology* [University of Chigaco Press, 1995], ix). This desire to think beyond disappointment equals, in Winquist's view, the desire to think theologically in postmodern times. Drawing on Nietzsche and Deleuze, Winquist states: "We are disappointed when thinking does not satisfy us with the intensity of a display to which we can say /yes/". See Winquist, "The Becoming of Metaphysics", in *The Otherness of God*, ed. Orrin F. Summerell (University Press of Virginia, 1998), 142. Winquist then aims at a political and revolutionary theology, but not one that strives for *voice*—not one that strives for God's or the Subject's right to speak—but a political *epistemology* after the death of God and after the displacement of the Self. He suggests that theology is closely akin to what Deleuze and Felix Guattari, in their book on Kafka, refer to as a minor intensive use of a major language (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* [1986]). Winquist writes: "What is special about theology as a discursive practice is that its extreme formulations are intensive uses of language that can and often do transgress the repressive totalizations of dominant discourses". The minor intensive theological use of language, Winquist argues, pressures the ordinary weave of discourse and opens it to desire. Thus, theology becomes a work against "the disappointment of thinking" (Winquist, *Desiring Theology*, x). Winquist was earlier connected with the Process Theology movement introduced in 1975 when John B. Cobb Jr. and David Ray Griffin edited *Process Theology: An Introductory Exposition*. The process theologians, in short, moved away from a theology of static being and substance toward a theology of and in process. Process theology draws on thinkers who also influenced Deleuze, like Whitehead and Bergson, which is why Winquist's step into a Deleuzian theology appears quite natural. Catherine Keller, a former student of Cobb, has made a similar academic journey in that she, too, approached Deleuzian thought as a theological resource from a process-theological outset. Keller's *The Face of the Deep: A Theology of Becoming* (Routledge, 2003), which I

discuss in chapter 5, is another attempt at a Deleuzian theology. In *The Face of the Deep*, Keller makes use of Deleuze, among others, in order to radically rethink the Christian doctrine of creation, which claims that a transcendent Lord singlehandedly created the universe *ex nihilo*, out of nothing. Keller shows the political, sexual and racial implications of such a re-evaluation of Christian thought. See also John McSweeny, *Foucault Studies* 2 (May 2005), 117–44.

34. See, for instance, Mary McClintock Fulkerson's feminist theological classic of 1994, *Changing the Subject: Women's Discourses and Feminist Theology* (Wipf and Stock, 2001). Foucault has been used and discussed in a variety of ways in theology, although the more exhaustive introductions of Foucault and theology have appeared in the beginning of the twenty-first century. Jeremy R. Carrette and James Bernauer, *Michel Foucault and Theology: The Politics of Religious Experience* (Ashgate, 2004) was the first book of its kind. It brings together essays that examine power and sexuality in the church in late antiquity, the relationship between theology and politics, new challenges to the nature of theological knowledge in terms of Foucault's critical project and that rethink theology in terms of Foucault's work on the history of sexuality. See also Bernauer and David W. Rasmussen, *The Final Foucault* (MIT Press, 1988), and David Galston, *Archives and the Event of God: The Impact of Michel Foucault on Philosophical Theology* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2011). Galston depicts the effects that Foucault's *Archaeology of Knowledge* and *Discipline and Punish* have had on the study of theology and religion. Stephen Carr's article, "Foucault amongst the Theologians", *Sophia* 40, no. 2 (2001), engages insightfully with the ways Foucault has been handled theologically.

35. James W. Bernauer's remarkable *Michel Foucault's Force of Flight: Toward an Ethics for Thought* (Humanity Books, 1990) does not have an explicit theological aim, but I find that it nonetheless forms a landmark in the field of Foucault and theology. The book is an in-depth study of Foucault's published as well as unpublished work, and runs the thesis—at odds with certain readings of Foucault at the time—that Foucault offers much more than an account of a closed-in world of prisons and discursive practices; through Bernauer's reading, Foucault strives for an ethics for thought, bordering on a mystical ethics, that advocates a constant transgression of knowledge as well as of the self.

36. For example, Clair Colebrook, *Ethics and Representation: From Kant to Post-structuralism* (Edinburgh University Press, 1999); "Questioning Representation", in *SubStance* 29, no. 2, (2000), 47–67; *Irony in the Work of Philosophy* (University of Nebraska Press, 2002); and *Irony: The New Critical Idiom* (Routledge, 2003).

37. Arthur Bradley's *Negative Theology in Modern French Philosophy* (Routledge, 2004) examines the relationship between Derrida and Foucault, among others, and negative theology. Bradley does not use this outset to introduce a theological account of Foucault, nor of Derrida, but discusses and reflects insightfully on the theological parallels and implications of their "thought from outside". The notion of "thought from outside" stems from Foucault's essay on Maurice Blanchot titled "Maurice Blanchot: The Thought from Outside"; French edition, "La pensee du dehors", *Critique: Revue générale des publications francaises et étrangères* 229 (June 1966), to which Blanchot responds in his "Michel Foucault as I Imagine Him" ("Michel Foucault tel que je l'imagine" [Éditions Fata Morgana, 1986]). Both texts appear in English translation in *Foucault/Blanchot*, trans. Jeffrey Mehlman and Brian Massumi (Zone, 1990).

38. Not only political theorists, but philosophers like Richard Rorty, Jurgen Habermas, Jacques Derrida, Emmanuel Lévinas, Jean-Luc Marion, Gianni Vattimo and Eugenio Trìas all show an increased or renewed interest in religion.

39. Fredriksen, Paula, "Historical Integrity, Interpretive Freedom: The Philosopher's Paul and the Problem of Anachronism", in *St. Paul among the Philosophers,* ed. John D. Caputo and Linda Martín Alcoff (Indiana University Press, 2009), 61–73.

40. Jayne Svenungsson, "Wrestling with Angels, or How to Avoid Decisionist Messianic Romances", Žižek's Theology special issue, *International Journal of Žižek Studies* 4, no. 4 (2010), 1–16, quote on 1. Svenungsson's article takes its outset in this critique, but is primarily an excellent constructive contribution to the debate as such.

41. Svenungsson, "Wrestling with Angels", 1.

42. Alain Badiou, *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism*, trans. Ray Brassier (Stanford University Press, 2003); French edition, *Saint Paul: La fondation de l'universalisme* (Presses universitaires de France, 1997).

43. Badiou's distinction between the universal/singular versus the general/particular recalls Deleuze's distinction, which will be addressed in chapter 5. It has been argued, however, that when Badiou writes on Deleuze, he does not take the full consequences of the Deleuzian account of univocity (which will be introduced below). According to Daniel W. Smith, Badiou understands Deleuze's univocal being as a kind of neoplatonic "philosophy of the One" (Smith, "Doctrine of Univocity", 181). In consequence, a slight shift in the account of Deleuzian immanence occurs in Badiou's reading, so that this immanence becomes emanative: a one immanent ontology from which every expression of life emanates. In Deleuze, however, "it is we and our individuality which remains univocal

in and for univocal Being". See Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (Continuum, 2008), 48; French edition, *Différence et répétition* (Presses universitaires de France, 1968), 57. "We", the different expressions of life, do not eventuate out of a univocal plane, but we—all expressions of life—"are" the univocal plane of infinite expression. Being is difference. For this reason, Badiou's account of the singular universality in Christ opens to a more "generalisable" Christian vision than another understanding of Deleuze would have done; this, in turn, grounds the possibility to elevate the singular Christ event over the Jewish repetition of Law.

44. Foucault, "The Prose of Actaeon", in *Religion and Culture: Michel Foucault*, ed. Jeremy R. Carrette (Routledge, 1999), 83; French edition, "La prose d'Actéon", *Nouvelle revue française* 12, no. 135 (March 1964), 457.

45. Karen Barad, "Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter", in *Signs* 28, no. 3 (2003), 801–31, quote on 804. See also Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Duke University Press, 1997).

46. Barad, "Posthumanist Performativity", 804.

47. Dorothea Olkowski, *Deleuze and the Ruin of Representation* (University of California Press, 1999), 1.

48. See, for example, Manuel Delanda, "Deleuze, Materialism and Politics", in *Deleuze and Politics*, ed. Ian Buchanan and Nicolas Thoburn (Edinburgh University Press, 2008).

49. See, for instance, Goodchild, *Deleuze and Guattari*, 106ff.; Colebrook, *Ethics and Representation*, 162ff.

50. Timothy Murray, *Mimesis, Masochism and Mime: The Politics of Theatricality in Contemporary French Thought* (University of Michigan Press, 2000), 2.

51. The notion of post-representation has been used for instance in relation to the Zapatista movement in Mexico, as well as in relation to the urban Occupy movement. In these settings, the notion refers explicitly to political engagement beyond democratic representation. It refers to political activism, for example, when democratic representation has proved dysfunctional and/or ineffective for those who are in actual need of representation.

52. Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (Harvard University Press, 1999), 254. Her critique of post-representation is also found in "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (University of Illinois Press, 1988), 271–316, and *Outside in the Teaching Machine* (Routledge, 1993).

53. I know of no existing study of Ward in relation to Foucault, nor is there to date an exhaustive study of Ward. His work is discussed in many articles, however, for instance, by Virginia Burrus in her contribution to *Interpreting the Postmodern: Responses to Radical Orthodoxy,* ed. Rosemary Radford Ruether and Marion Grau (T & T Clark, 2006). In this essay, "Radical Orthodoxy and the Heresiological Habit: Engaging Graham Ward's Christology", Burrus discusses Ward's Christology through two of Ward's articles. Starting from a different outset, I arrive in chapter 3 at a conclusion parallel to that of Burrus. I also indicate, however, that Ward's text does open to "otherness"—to some extent despite his own intention—while Burrus finds he does not (Burrus, "Radical Orthodoxy and the Heresiological Habit", 53).

54. Slavoj Žižek, "Dialectical Clarity versus the Misty Conceit of Paradox", in John Milbank and Slavoj Žižek, *The Monstrosity of Christ: Paradox or Dialectic?,* ed. Creston Davis (MIT Press, 2011), 234–306.

55. Altizer has been read in relation to Deleuze in a PhD dissertation by Winquist's student Richard Lee Feero, "Radical Theology in Preparation: From Altizer to Edwards" (PhD diss., Syracuse University, 1993). Feero argues that Altizer turns his theology away from God's being towards God's speech, which parallels my reasoning in chapter 5. In Feero, this turn is read through Deleuze's analysis of the visible and the speakable, which recast atheism's relation to the tradition in terms of systematically different forms of discourse, which, in turn, is a different take than mine in chapter 5.

Notes to chapter 2

1. Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* [1966] (Vintage, 1990), xv; French edition, *Les mots et les choses: Une archéologie des sciences humaines* (Gallimard, 1995), 7.

2. Foucault, *Order of Things*, 36; *Les mots et les choses*, 51.

3. Foucault, *Order of Things*, 59; *Les mots et les choses*, 73.

4. Foucault, *Order of Things*, 35; *Les mots et les choses*, 50.

5. Foucault, *Order of Things*, 43; *Les mots et les choses*, 58.

6. William B. Ashworth Jr. underlines that many historians have neglected the development of natural history in the period 1560–1660. This period is often regarded one of continuity, and Aldrovandi and Jonston are often mistakenly considered to be engaged in much the same activity; Ashworth, "The Revolution in Natural History: Natural History and the Emblematic World View", in *The Scientific Revolution,* ed. Marcus Hellyer (Blackwell, 2003), 132.

7. Foucault, *Order of Things*, 128–29; *Les mots et les choses*, 140–41.

8. The Belgian painter René Magritte called one of his exhibitions in New York "Les mots et les choses" before Foucault chose his book title—which could be of interest in relation to my discussion in chapter 6.

9. Foucault, *Order of Things*, 43; *Les mots et les choses*, 58.

10. Foucault, *Order of Things*, 68; *Les mots et les choses*, 82.

11. Colebrook, *Ethics and Representation*, 182.

12. Foucault develops what he calls the *hermeneutics of the self* in lectures later in his career and finally in his unfinished *History of Sexuality;* see Foucault, "About the Beginning of the Hermeneutics of the Self", in *Religion and Culture: Michel Foucault*, ed. Jeremy R. Carrette (Routledge, 1999).

13. "Mallarmé was constantly effacing himself from his own language, to the point of not wishing to figure in it except as an executant in a pure ceremony of the Book in which the discourse would compose itself" (Foucault, *Order of Things*, 306; *Les mots et les choses*, 317).

14. Deleuze, *Foucault*, [1986], trans. Seán Hand (Continuum, 1999), 88–89; French edition, *Foucault* (Les éditions de minuit, 1986), 94-95.

15. Foucault, *Order of Things*, 81; *Les mots et les choses*, 95.

16. The notion of the commentary is also developed in Foucault's lecture at the Collége de France, where it is introduced as one of several principles that regulate the discourse; see Foucault, "The Discourse on Language" [1971], in *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (Pantheon, 1972), 220; French edition, *L'ordre du discours* (Gallimard, 1971), 23.

17. Foucault, *Order of Things*, 81; *Les mots et les choses*, 95.

18. Foucault, "A Preface to Transgression", in *Religion and Culture: Michel Foucault*, ed. Jeremy R. Carrette (Routledge, 1999), 59; French edition, "Préface à la transgression", *Critique: Revue générale des publications françaises et étrangères* 195/196 (August-September 1963), 753–54. This commemoration issue of *Critique* (*Hommage à Georges Bataille*) was published in honor of Bataille, the journal's founder. It also contained Maurice Blanchot's "Le jeu de la pensée", and Pierre Klossowski's "A propos du simulacra dans la communication de Georges Bataille", which indicates the close relations—both personal and with regard to practices of thought—between these thinkers and writers.

19. The expression of the *anonymous murmur* occurs in the poetry of René Char, who is frequently cited throughout the Foucauldian oeuvre. The following exemplifies how the murmur occurs in Char, as well as how it relates to the event: "S'assurer de ses propres murmures et mener l'action jusqu'à son verbe en fleur. Ne pas tenir ce bref feu de joie pour memorable"

(René Char, *Till frid i kramp: Édition bilingue,* ed. Roger Fjellström [Ordström, 1991], 54, 110). On Foucault's use of Char see, for example, David Macey, *The Lives of Michel Foucault* (Vintage, 1994), 70.

20. Foucault, "Preface to Transgression", 65; "Préface à la transgression", 760. In an issue of *Critique* dedicated to Blanchot, appearing three years later, Foucault contributed an essay on Blanchot articulating his belief that language can escape the "mode of being of discourse". By this he means, in other words, the "dynasty of representation", and he finds this escape from representation in what he names the *void* of language—a void in which "the unending out-pouring of language uninterruptedly continues" (Foucault, "Maurice Blanchot", in *Foucault/Blanchot*, 11–12; "La pensee du dehors", 524).

21. Foucault, *Order of Things*, xvi–xvii; *Les mots et les choses*, 8.

22. See also Foucault, *Order of Things*, 146; *Les mots et les choses*, 159.

23. Foucault, *Order of Things*, 16; *Les mots et les choses*, 31.

24. Deleuze, *Foucault*, 109; *Foucault* (French ed.), 117. I will touch on this overthrow of phenomenology in chapter 5, where we shall see how Foucault (long before Deleuze wrote his book on Foucault) similarly praises Deleuze for turning phenomenology on its head. Deleuze's *The Logic of Sense* (1969) can, in Foucault's view, "be read as the most alien book imaginable from [Maurice Merleau-Ponty's] *The Phenomenology of Perception*". Foucault, "Theatrum Philosophicum", in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews by Michel Foucault*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard, trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Cornell University Press, 1980), 170; French edition, "Theatrum Philosophicum", *Critique: Revue générale des publications françaises et étrangères* 26, no. 282 (November 1970), 888–89.

25. Deleuze, *Foucault*, 109; *Foucault*, 117.

26. Deleuze, *Foucault*, 109, 111–12; *Foucault*, 117, 119.

27. Deleuze, *Foucault*, 109; *Foucault*, 117.

28. Deleuze, *Foucault*, 112; *Foucault*, 119. The entire reasoning in this part of *Foucault* introduces the notion of "the fold", which becomes a key term in Deleuze from this book onwards. The present study focuses on the dual knowledge since I find this aspect fruitful for understanding Foucault on Magritte, as discussed in chapter 6 below.

29. Thomas Flynn, "Foucault's Mapping of History", in *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, 2nd ed., ed. Gary Gutting (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 41.

30. Foucault, "Theatrum Philosophicum", 174–75; "Theatrum philosophicum" [French ed.], 891–92.

31. For a fuller orientation to the Deleuzian notion of writing and

style, see Gregg Lambert, "The Philosopher *and* the Writer: A Question of Style", in *Between Deleuze and Derrida*, ed. Paul Patton and John Protevi (Continuum, 2004), 120–34.

32. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 165; *Différence et répétition*, 170.

33. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 330; *Différence et répétition*, 337.

34. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 174; *Différence et répétition*, 180.

35. Massumi, translator's foreword to Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Athlone, 1999), xi. In Deleuze's *Essays Critical and Clinical*, "to have done with judgment" is an allusion to Antonin Artaud's play *To Have Done with the Judgment of God* (1947).

36. Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 127; French edition, *Critique et Clinique* (Les Éditions de Minuit, 1993), 159. See also Dale, "Knowing One's Enemy", 126–37.

37. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 330; *Différence et répétition*, 337.

38. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 333–34; *Différence et répétition*, 340–41.

39. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 334; *Différence et répétition*, 341.

40. More on Deleuze's account of the creative division in Plato in chapter 5.

41. Obviously, Christianity had been around for more than a millennium before it was influenced by Aristotelian thought through Thomas Aquinas and his many commentaries on Aristotle. Jacob Sherman, among others, critiques Deleuze's straw man account of Christian transcendence and claims that Deleuze misses out on the lines of flight present in Christian thought (Sherman, "No Werewolves in Theology?, 1–20). Joshua Ramey underlines the spirituality of Deleuze's thought, but he relates him to the hermetic tradition which, he suggests, can be seen as a precursor to the wisdom of Moses, Plato and Christianity. (4.) Deleuze's interest in such spiritual roots is, in Ramey's view, explained by Deleuze's search for new openings for thought. The hermetic tradition offers no clear distinctions between the rational and the spiritual, why it also may open new horizons for thought in our time. Ramey, Joshua, *The hermetic Deleuze: Philosophy and Spiritual Ordeal* (Duke University Press, 2012).

42. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 29–30; *Différence et répétition*, 40.

43. The univocal tradition has, according to Daniel W. Smith, not existed in the way Deleuze suggests. Smith concludes, however, that this is really beside the point. The fact that he presents it, and traces it through the history of ideas, is enough to claim its existence as effect (Smith, "Doctrine of Univocity", 168).

44. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 44ff., 376ff.; *Différence et répétition*, 52ff., 387–88.

45. Pickstock, "Duns Scotus: His Historical and Contemporary Significance", *Modern Theology* 21, no. 4 (October 2005), 543–74. See also Pickstock, *After Writing: On the Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy* [1998] (Blackwell, 2003).

46. For a fuller orientation, Philip Tonner reads the Scotist concept of univocity anew after the hype provoked by Deleuzian thought in "Duns Scotus' Concept of the Univocity of Being: Another Look", *Pli* 18 (2007), 129–46.

47. Referred to by Deleuze as "the greatest book of pure ontology" (Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 48; *Différénce et répétition*, 57).

48. The term "univocity of being" appears in Deleuze's *Spinoza* and disappears after *The Logic of Sense* (Smith, "Doctrine of Univocity", 168).

49. Equivocity, univocity and analogy are discussed in relation to Deleuze and Klossowski by Eleanor Kaufman in "Klossowski, Deleuze, and Orthodoxy", *Diacritics* 35 (spring 2005), 47–60.

50. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 49; *Différénce et répétition*, 57.

51. Smith, "Doctrine of Univocity", 169.

52. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 49; *Différénce et répétition*, 58.

53. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 45; *Différénce et répétition*, 53.

54. Justaert, "Gilles Deleuze and the Transcendence of the Immanent", 96.

55. Deleuze's account of univocity, however, reads: "It is not the differences which are and must be: it is being which is Difference, in the sense that it is said of difference. Moreover, it is not we who are univocal in a Being which is not; it is we and our individuality which remains univocal in and for univocal Being" (Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 48; *Différénce et répétition*, 57). "The essence of univocal being is to include individuating differences, while these differences do not have the same essence and do not change the essence of being—just as white includes various intensities, while remaining the same white" (Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 45; *Différénce et répétition*, 53). In other words, in Deleuze's account of univocal being there are *not* differences that exist as exceptions to the same. Such a notion would presuppose a common being in relation to which to differ as difference, which is why difference, in turn, would only exist as exception and in a hierarchical order. Instead, to Deleuze, being *is* difference and we are univocal in and for being as univocal, which is why expressions are infinite and we are infinite expressions.

56. "Transcendence is always a product of immanence". Deleuze, "Immanence: A Life" [1995] in *Pure Immanence: Essays on A Life*, trans. Anne Boyman (Zone, 2005), 31; French edition, "L'Immanence: Une vie", *Philosophie* 47 (September 1995), 6.

57. Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation* [1981], trans. Daniel

W. Smith (Continuum, 2005), 7; French edition, *Francis Bacon: Logique de la sensation* (Éditions de la différence, 1994), 14.

58. "There is always an atheism to be extracted from a religion." Deleuze and Guattari, "What Is Philosophy?", trans. Graham Burchell and Hugh Tomlinson (Verso, 2003), 92; French edition, *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?* (Les Éditions de minuit, 1991), PAGE.

59. In "Nietzsche and Saint Paul, Lawrence and John of Patmos", he suggests, through Lawrence, the connection between the immanent force [*puissance*] of Christ and the transcendent power [*pouvoir*] of Christianity: "Between Christ, Saint Paul, and John of Patmos, the chain closes in on itself: Christ the aristocrat, the artist of the individual soul, who wants to give his soul; John of Patmos, the worker, the miner, who lays claim to the collective soul and wants to take everything; and Saint Paul, who closes the link, a kind of Lenin who will organize the collective soul, who will make it "an ologarchy of martyrs"—he gives Christ the aims, and the Apocalypse the means. Was not all this essential to the formation of the system of judgment? Individual suicide and mass-suicide, with self-glorification on all sides. Death, death, this is the only judgment" (Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, 50–51; *Critique et Clinique*, 67–68).

60. Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 7; *Francis Bacon* (French ed.), 13.

61. Smith, "Doctrine of Univocity", 167.

62. Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 7; *Francis Bacon*, 14.

63. Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy,* trans. Hugh Tomlinson (Columbia University Press, 2006), 152; French edition, *Nietzsche et la philosophie* (PUBLISHER, 1962), PAGE.

64. Ibid.

65. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* §4; quoted by Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 144; *Nietzsche et la philosophie*, PAGE.

66. More on El Greco in Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation* (*Francis Bacon: Logique de la sensation*).

67. Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, see 77ff., 28, 1–5; *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?*, 75ff., 33, 7–10.

68. See, for example, Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 81; *Nietzsche et la philosophie*, PAGE.

69. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 45; *Differénce et répétition*, 53.

70. As Foucault writes on Deleuze: "Repetition, which functions within the concept as the impertinent vibration of identities, becomes, within a system of representation, the organizing principle for similarities. But *what* recognizes these similarities, the exactly alike and the least similar (…) if not good sense? Good sense is the world's most effective agent of division. (…) And it is good sense that reigns in the philosophy of representation"

(Foucault, "Theatrum Philosophicum", 183; "Theatrum philosophicum", 898).

Notes to Chapter 3

1. Ward, *Barth, Derrida*, 244.

2. The earlier radical theology movement in the 1960s and onwards with a wide range of thinkers such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Dorothee Sölle, Paul Tillich and Thomas J. J. Altizer.

3. In consequence, Pickstock also critiques Deleuze, for instance, in the article "Messiaen and Deleuze: The Musico-Theological Critique of Modernism and Postmodernism", *Theory Culture Society* 25 (2008), 173–99, quote on 173. See John Milbank on Deleuze's univocity in, for example, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2006).

4. Graham Ward, *Christ and Culture* (Blackwell, 2005), 22.

5. Ward, *Christ and Culture,* 29.

6. Ward, *Christ and Culture,* 29.

7. The fact that Ward claims a postmodern label is discussed for instance by Bruce L. McCormack in *Modern and Orthodox*, 148ff.

8. Ward, "Introduction, or, A Guide to Theological Thinking in Cyberspace" [1997], in *The Postmodern God: A Theological Reader*, ed. Graham Ward (Blackwell, 1997), xv.

9. Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 81 (Foucault, *Les mots et les choses*, 95).

10. Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 81 (Foucault, *Les mots et les choses*, 95).

11. Ward, *Christ and Culture,* 29.

12. Ward, *Christ and Culture*, 18.

13. Foucault, "Discourse on Language", 220 ("L'ordre du discours", 23–24).

14. Ibid.

15. Foucault, "Discourse on Language", 221 ("L'ordre du discours", 27).

16. Ibid. (italics in original).

17. Ward, *Christ and Culture*, 1.

18. Ward, *Christ and Culture*, 92.

19. Ward, *Christ and Culture*, 95.

20. Ward, *Christ and Culture*, 114.

21. Ward suggests that his "economy of response"—as a constant reciprocality of body and spirit, Christ and world—in many ways parallels Augustine's relation between the body and the soul (Ward, *Christ and Culture*, 118–19).

22. Ward, *Christ and Culture*, 31.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.

25. Or, with the words of Deleuze and Guattari, Ward's conclusion from his reading of Mark is an excellent example of how primary narratives are treated in 'the postsignifying regime' as described in *A Thousand Plateaus*. In the postsignifying regime acceptance and thus salvation is not reached through obedience of a particular authority but through a full internalization of the truth of the dominant power in order for the subject to be able to completely rule him or herself; Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* [1980] (Athlone, 1999), 125. It is a regime also characterized by the possibility of betrayal—the possibility to escape the regime, but it is an escape closely and inescapably connected to the restraint ultimately demanding internalization of power or of "the Book" (Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 111, 115ff., 129–30; *Mille plateaux*, PAGE, PAGEff., PAGE).

26. Ward, *Christ and Culture*, 59.

27. Raschke, "*À-Dieu* to Jacques Derrida: Descartes' Ghost, or the Holy Spirit in Secular Theology", in *Secular Theology*, ed. Crockett, 45.

28. Ward, *Christ and Culture*, 41.

29. Foucault, "Discourse on Language", 221; *L'ordre du discours*, 27.

30. Ward, *Christ and Culture*, 42.

31. Ward, *Barth, Derrida*, 243.

32. First Thess. 5:2–6 reads: "The day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, "There is peace and security", then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober".

33. Ward, *Christ and Culture*, 51.

34. Ward, *Christ and Culture*, 52. This new use of the ideal of vigilance is, I believe, not restricted to Ward's theology. Just to give another example, in their introduction to *Questioning God*—a book to which both Derrida and Ward contribute—the editors John D. Caputo, Mark Dooley and Michael J. Scanlon write: "For how else can religion be faithful to itself, to its past and to its future, how else can it keep watch on its own worst tendencies and keep open to its best tendencies, apart from the vigilance of a deconstrutive way of thinking?" (*Questioning God*, 2).

35. Ward, *Christ and Culture*, 58.

36. Ward, *Christ and Culture*, 47.

37. Ward, *Christ and Culture*, 46.

38. Ibid.

39. Ward, *Barth, Derrida*, 238.

40. Ward, *Barth, Derrida*, 239.

41. Ward, *Barth, Derrida*, 21.

42. For details on its publication, see note 85 above. In "A Preface to Transgression" ("Préface à la transgression"), Foucault's fascination with Bataille is evident both in style and in content. The French *transgression* translates well into its English counterpart.

43. See Foucault, "Preface to Transgression", 67–68; "Préface à la transgression", 762ff. Foucault's essay has been critiqued and hallowed by feminists of different strands; a critical analysis is performed by Judith Surkis, for example, in "No Fun and Games Until Someone Loses an Eye: Transgression and Masculinity in Bataille and Foucault", *Diacritics* 26, no. 2 (summer 1996), 18–30. It has also inspired queer theorists like Jonathan Dollimore.

44. Foucault, "Preface to Transgression", 61; "Préface à la transgression", 754–55.

45. Ibid.

46. When Foucault relates Bataille's writing to that of Klossowski, he sees both as forms of transgression and he emphasizes that Bataille offers a kind of reversal of the sacred. He brings the sacred and elevated back down to into the human body and flesh. More on this below.

47. Ward, *Barth, Derrida*, 244.

48. Ward, *Barth, Derrida*, 252–56. British theologian Gavin Hyman compares Radical Orthodoxy and radical theology but does not choose Ward as object for his study of Radical Orthodoxy. Despite the obvious reason (that Ward is Hyman's supervisor), Ward is also not quite the full-feathered Radical Orthodox, in Hyman's regard, as is John Milbank, whom he does choose to study. In the end, Hyman himself sides with Ward's Derridean account of the function of the narrative, but also with Ward's move away from Derrida. The radical theologian whom Hyman analyses is Don Cupitt (once Ward's supervisor!). Cupitt aims to leave behind the entire idea of an authoritative Christian narrative. A closer reading of Cupitt, however, leads Hyman to conclude that "every attempt to do without a metanarrative always ends up by unwittingly reinstating one. An ultimate, overarching, organizing logic always reinstates itself, in spite of our attempts to repress it". Hyman's reading of Milbank shows the opposite—that "although there is a sense in which metanarratives are unavoidable, there is also simultaneously a sense in which they are impossible; for this ultimate metanarrative is always also inherently unstable". Milbank *wants* to found a grand narrative for contemporary Christianity, but Hyman

argues that Milbank's endeavour finally shows that this is never quite possible. In consequence, Hyman suggests a third way, and his choice of path draws close to that of his supervisor Ward. Hyman concludes that "we must dwell within this paradox, where the metanarrative is as unavoidable as it is impossible, and where all settlement and finality are deferred". The grand narrative is inescapable but it is also impossible. In other words, Hyman formulates a similar Derridean account with a Christian twist as does Ward. To both of these theologians, the necessity yet impossibility of rendering an account is the truth of theology, of the Gospel itself (Hyman, *The Predicament of Postmodern Theology*, 143).

49. Ward, *Barth, Derrida*, 245.

50. Ward, *Barth, Derrida*, 237.

51. Ward, *Barth, Derrida*, 243.

52. Ibid.

53. Ward, *Barth, Derrida*, 248.

54. Ward, *Barth, Derrida*, 246.

55. Foucault proposes a different point of departure, where the old questions ("Who is the real author?" "Have we proof of his authenticity and originality?" "What has the author revealed of his most profound self in his language?") will no longer be heard. Instead, Foucault imagines new questions to appear: "What are the modes of existence of this discourse?" "What placements are determined for possible subjects?" "Who can fulfil these diverse functions of the subject?" See Foucault, "What Is an Author?" [1969], in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews by Michel Foucault*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard, trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Cornell University Press, 1980), 138; French edition, "Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?", *Bulletin de la Société Française de Philosophie* 63, no. 3 (February 1969), 95.

56. Foucault, "What Is an Author?", 117–18; "Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?", 79.

57. First, Foucault says, the notion of the author has been replaced by the idea of a *work*. In parts of Foucault's contemporary literary theory, the focus is laid on the entirety of an authorship. The focus is not so much on person or intention but on the immanent structure and pattern of a work. Foucault, however, sarcastically remarks that while this might serve to provide a different emphasis on the texts as such the author is still considered the structuring principle defining the *limits* of the work examined. Additionally, the approach is still governed by secret rules. There are implicit regulations since, somehow, this approach manages to ignore problems like that of deciding whether or not a personal note—say, a reminder of an appointment—found among the works of Nietzsche should be considered a part of the canonized authorship or not (Foucault, "What Is an Author?, 118; "Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?", 79).

58. The French word *écriture* ("writing") has a double reference: to the act of writing in the present and the nature of writing in a primordial and metaphysical sense.

59. Foucault, "What Is an Author?", 120; "Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?", 80.

60. Around this time, Derrida and Foucault were involved in mutual critique and discussions regarding the extent to which they, respectively, managed to avoid transcendentalism. I am not able to go deeper into these discussions here, nor to discuss Derrida or Foucault's critique of him, which has been disputed (Peter Flaherty, Bernard Flynn, Roy Boyne and others have written on this debate). In the present study I merely use Foucault's point of critique to throw light upon the possible theological implications of Ward's *metanoia*.

61. Foucault, "What Is an Author?", 120; "Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?", 80.

62. Ibid.

63. In the introduction I referred to Daniel W. Smith, who argues that Derrida follows the orthodox path in Christian thought. In Smith's regard, Derrida will remain part of the Christian orthodox and "transcendent" tradition, regardless of how he is applied in theology. Possibly, contemporary Radical Orthodox theology, with its interest in Derrida, could indicate that Foucault and Smith have a point, although this will remain unanswered in the present study (Smith, "Doctrine of Univocity", 174).

64. Foucault, "What Is an Author?", 120; "Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?", 80.

65. Virginia Burrus, "Radical Orthodoxy and the Heresiological Habit", 53.

66. Burrus, "Radical Orthodoxy and the Heresiological Habit", 53.

Notes to Chapter 4

1. A version of this analysis is published as "Post-representational Theology", in *The Movement of Nothingness*, ed. Daniel M. Price and Ryan Johnson (Davies Group, Publishers, 2012).

2. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia,* trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (Continuum, 2004); French edition, *Capitalisme et schizophrénie 1: L'Anti-Œdipe* (Les Éditions de minuit, 1972). Mark Seem adds that radical political movements should "learn from the psychotic how to shake off the Oedipal yoke and the effects of power, in order to initiate a radical politics of desire freed from all beliefs" (Seem, introduction to Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, xxiii).

3. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 21; *L'Anti-Œdipe*, 30.

4. Ward, *Christ and Culture*, 61.

5. Mark Godin detects a similar pattern in Ward's writing. Contrary to Ward's own explicit intention, Godin states, the present, the contingent and the physical body is continually disregarded on behalf of the transcendent, the eternal and the eschatological body. Although Ward does affirm that "discovering the eternal and unchanging within the particular and temporal is the axiomatic concern of Christology, incarnation and sacramentalism", Godin shows how Ward keeps doing the opposite. Ward wishes to enhance the actual body, its physical reactions and realities, but ends up with an elevation of the transcendent, eschatological body. See Mark Anthony Godin, "Discerning the Body: A Sacramental Hermeneutic in Literature and Liturgy", (PhD diss., University of Glasgow, 2009), 38ff. A similar motive, perhaps, makes Ward cry out "The risen body has genitals!" at the International Society for Religion, Literature and Culture annual conference in Oxford, September 2010. Ward keeps talking about the body, but somehow his message does not come across (Ward, *Barth, Derrida*, xviii).

6. Keller makes this distinction partly on the basis of statements by Edward Said and Wolfhart Pannenberg (Keller, *The Face of the Deep*, 159).

7. Keller, *The Face of the Deep*, xvi.

8. Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, 77ff., 28, 1–5; *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?*, 75ff., 33, 7–10.

9. Goodchild, *Deleuze and Guattari*, 3.

10. Keller, "Process and Chaosmos: The Whiteheadian Fold in the Discourse of Difference", in *Process and Difference: Between Cosmological and Poststructuralist Postmodernisms,* ed. Catherine Keller and Anne Daniell (State University of New York Press, 2002), 64.

11. This would go along with Peter Hallward's critique of Deleuze as mentioned in chapter 1.

12. Let me note, with David Macey, that "much of 'Theatrum Philosophicum' is a puzzling and mysterious game being played out between Foucault and Deleuze" (Macey, *The Lives of Michel Foucault*, 254). It is therefore unavoidable that their voices intermingle in the analysis below. It is, however, through and through Foucault's voice we are following, though he is, all along, speaking of his friend. The two thinkers were friends, colleagues and even fellow activists in many different ways. Once, however, their political engagement led them to part ways for seven years. In autumn of 1977, they were engaged in "the Croissant affair": The West German lawyer Klaus Croissant had defended the Baader-Meinhof gang and went to France for political asylum. Croissant had been jailed for "supporting a criminal organisation" outside the court room. He was accused of "arousing international interest in

the members" of the organisation, but was also informally accused by many for having made the situation worse for members of the faction, so that they finally committed suicide in prison. Croissant hid in France in a house of an acquaintance of Foucault, actor and filmmaker Hélène Châtelain. Croissant was found and arrested, and so was Châtelain and a friend of hers. This instigated the French actions for Croissant's case; a thousand croissants wrapped in foil were sent to lawyers, politicians and others, together with a note asking why a croissant could travel freely across the borders when a lawyer could not. Foucault said that the point in siding with Croissant was not "to say that West Germany was fascist or that Croissant is a model for liberal lawyers, but to oppose extradition". A petition was circulated by Deleuze's close friend Félix Guattari, which many had signed, but Foucault refused since it referred to West Germany as fascist. Could this refusal have been an expression of his distrust for the force of posing statements, in naming, and thus underscore a divergence already present between the two thinkers, which, according to Philip Goodchild, is detectable beginning with Foucault's reading of Nietzsche and his notion of the force of the "non-place"? (Goodchild, *Deleuze and Guattari*, 131). Anyhow, this refusal is said to have prepared the ground for the break between Deleuze and Foucault. In the same few days, Foucault and his partner Daniel Defert were demonstrating outside the prison where Croissant was held; the police attacked the demonstrators and Foucault ended up with a broken rib. All this is said mainly to offer an insight into Deleuze and Foucault's friendship and lives (Macey, *The Lives of Michel Foucault*, 393–94).

13. Foucault, "Theatrum Philosophicum", 192; "Theatrum philosophicum", 904–905.

14. Foucault, "Theatrum Philosophicum", 165.

15. Foucault, "Theatrum Philosophicum", 196.

16. Foucault, "Theatrum Philosophicum", 192; "Theatrum philosophicum", 905.

17. Foucault, "Theatrum Philosophicum", 166, 885.

18. Foucault, "Theatrum Philosophicum", 166; "Theatrum philosophicum", 886. Note the interesting potential parallel to Christian thought: theology, in consequence, would become a series of anti-Christian discourses.

19. Foucault, 'Theatrum Philosophicum', 168; "Theatrum philosophicum", 887.

20. I use the word "idea" rather than "form" (as used in English translations of Plato), since Deleuze uses the French *idée* throughout *Différence et répétition,* where he subsequently develops his own concept of

the Idea as much in relation to Leibniz as to Kant and Plato, which is why the term takes on a kind of continuity of difference.

21. "It is useless to attempt the reversal of Platonism by reinstating the rights of appearances, ascribing to them solidity and meaning, and bringing them closer to essential forms by lending them a conceptual backbone: these timid creatures should not be encouraged to stand upright. Neither should we attempt to rediscover the supreme and solemn gesture which established, in a single stroke, the inaccessible Idea. Rather, we should welcome the cunning assembly that simulates and clamors at the door. And what will enter, submerging appearances and breaking its engagement to essence, will be the event; the incorporeal will dissipate the density of matter; a timeless insistence will destroy the circle that imitates eternity; an impenetrable singularity will divest itself of its contamination by purity; the actual semblance of the simulacrum will support the falseness of false appearances" (Foucault, "Theatrum Philosophicum", 168; "Theatrum philosophicum", 887).

22. According to Spivak, there is a risk embedded in the philosophical idea of post-representation. When used more freely, such a notion might in fact indicate that democratic representation has had its day and is no longer needed. See note 62 above for more.

23. Foucault, "Theatrum philosophicum", 192; "Theatrum philosophicum", 905.

24. Ibid.

25. See, for instance, biblical passages like: "And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb. 10:10); "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me'" (John 14:16).

26. Foucault, "Theatrum Philosophicum", 192; "Theatrum philosophicum", 905.

27. Ibid. This statement should be understood as a deepened account of the Nietzschean eternal recurrence and of the notion of becoming as a simple opposition to being. See for example: "For the Same, or the Identical, has an ontological sense: the repetition in the eternal return of that which differs" (Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 374, also 303–304, 370ff.; *Différénce et répétition*, 385, also 312–13, 380ff.).

28. As I read Foucault, his account of Deleuze differs from the mainstream of Deleuze reception that emphasizes instability and constant change as a key aspect of the affirmative force of Deleuzian thinking. The philosopher and feminist theorist Rosi Braidotti has written extensively on Deleuze and contributed enormously to the use of Deleuzian thought in feminist theory (for example, by combining his thought with that of Luce

Irigaray). In a review of Braidotti's *Metamorphoses: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming*, Kevin Pelletier questions her apraisal of the Deleuzian subject of constant change, a subject in a flow of constant becoming. Pelletier states that "Braidotti does not give much thought to the possibility of "becoming" being a painful experience rather than an ecstatic one. The sensation of always being in flux, far from any stable ground, is, for Braidotti, only to be extolled. Might there be disadvantages to this absence of stability?" In accordance with Foucault's view, Pelletier is right in raising doubts. Not primarily, however, since it might be painful to be in constant change, but since such a description of the Deleuzian subject misses out on what Foucault regards as a crucial the force of Deleuzian thought. As we shall see, Foucault here enhances the repetition of phantasms (such as the subject notion) in Deleuze rather than the creative flux of constant change; the present study, however, is not the place to discuss Deleuze reception per se. See Rosi Braidotti, *Metamorphoses: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming* (Polity, 2002), and Kevin Pelletier's review of Braidotti in *Cultural Critique* 58 (fall 2004), 206–207.

29. In *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze describes his idea of the phantasm as follows. The phantasm is the result of actions and passions. (1) It is the chance-driven movement where the ego opens onto novel impersonal and pre-individual intensities. (2) Inspired by Luce Irigaray, Deleuze says that the phantasm is a pure event that expresses infinitives (for example, to murder, to save, to witness). See Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense* [1969], trans. Mark Lester (Continuum, 2004), 241–47; French edition, *Logique du sens* (Les Éditions de minuit, 1994), 245–52. Despite the relative clarity of this definition, the notion of the phantasm is used in slightly different ways in Deleuze and even more so as it makes its way from the works of Klossowski into the philosophy of Deleuze and to some extent to that of Foucault. The relation between the notions of the simulacra and the phantasm is, likewise, not easily sorted out. Thank you, Jonnie Eriksson, for interesting discussions on this matter. Let us continue. (See, for instance, Daniel W. Smith, "Klossowski's Reading of Nietzsche: Impulses, Phantasms, Simulacra, Stereotypes", *Diacritics* 35, no. 1 (2009), 8–21. In this article, Smith suggests a different distinction between the simulacrum and the phantasm than my understanding through Foucault above.)

30. Indeed, Deleuze's later reading of Foucault (introduced in chapter 2) praises Foucault for doing just that.

31. The French writer and artist Pierre Klossowski is the inventor of many key Deleuzian concepts, some of which I use here: the phantasm, the simulacra, intensities and singularity. Naturally, both Deleuze and Foucault infuse these concepts with their own thinking when they use

them but they are both inspired and influenced by Klossowski's reading of Nietzsche in which he introduces these concepts. On Klossowski and how he has inspired Deleuze, see, for example, Smith, "Klossowski's Reading of Nietzsche", 8.

32. A philosophy of the phantasm, Foucault writes, must articulate what "Deleuze would perhaps not allow us to call" thought's "incorporeal materiality" (Foucault, "Theatrum Philosophicum", 169–70; "Theatrum philosophicum", 888). The reason behind his suggestion that Deleuze would not approve is that Deleuze's entire *Logic of Sense* builds on an assumption that "sense is a nonexisting entity" which, Deleuze writes, "maintains very special relations with nonsense" (Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, ix; *Logique du sens*, 7). Sense is a notion that Deleuze introduces to capture that which is not body and not language but that nonetheless unites and effects the two. Philip Goodchild describes "sense" in Deleuze as the empty space between bodies and language, a pure event, like for instance the greening of a tree, which possesses its own sense as a meaning extracted from its actualization in a body (Goodchild, *Deleuze and Guattari*, 116–17). To that extent, Deleuze locates a space for thought that is neither that of the body nor that of language—neither in/corporeal nor material—but a productive space, *sense*.

33. Foucault, "Theatrum Philosophicum", 172; "Theatrum philosophicum", 890.

34. "Being is said in a single and same sense of everything of which it is said, but that of which it is said differs: it is said of difference itself" (Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 45; *Différénce et répétition*, 53). "If being declares itself in the same way, it is not because being is one, but because the totality of chance is affirmed in the single dicethrow of the present". (Foucault, "Theatrum Philosophicum", 195; "Theatrum philosophicum", 906).

35. Slavoj Žižek has dedicated an entire book to a kind of love/hate critique of Deleuze: *Organs without Bodies: On Deleuze and Consequences* (Routledge, 2004). The book's title, *Organs without Bodies*, is the reversal of a Deleuzian key term—the "Body without Organs" (which incidentally has been used as a name by two famous pop bands)—a term that this study has no reason to explore further. In this book Žižek argues that the Deleuzian philosophy creates an almighty "superego". Deleuze's thinking, Žižek claims, might discharge the subject-object duality and thus free philosophy of the subject as transcendental point, but only at the peril of what is even worse: an omnipotent and almighty univocal ego. Consequent immanent thinking where transcendence is left behind leads, according to Žižek, to a regime of the superego. It leads to a regime of an "ought" of becoming, and this "ought" is without an "is" (41). Žižek's interpretation

and critique of Deleuze's thinking has been criticized as saying more about Žižek (and his development of Lacanian desire) than about Deleuze himself (which of course, though, is a cocky way of staying true to Deleuze, thus an expression of Žižek's sophisticated and witty critical style). Daniel W. Smith underlines, however, that Žižek expressly bases his reading of Deleuze on Alain Badiou's critical *Deleuze: The Clamor of Being* (1997) which leads to misunderstandings and thus to an illegitimate critique. Nevertheless, Žižek's reading does point out a few aspects of Deleuzian thought that might seem problematic at first encounter (or, to borrow the words of Spivak, that might be problematic when "in less careful hands"). See Daniel W. Smith, "The Inverse Side of the Structure: Žižek on Deleuze on Lacan", *Criticism* 46, no. 4 (2004), 635–50.

36. Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, 325; *Logique du sens*, 330.

37. Foucault, "Prose of Actaeon", 79; "La prose d'Actéon", 453.

38. Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, 322; *Logique du sens*, 326–27.

39. Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols, or How to Philosophize with a Hammer*, trans. Duncan Large (Oxford University Press, 1998), 19.

40. Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, 322; *Logique du sens*, 327.

41. Foucault, "Theatrum Philosophicum", 174; "Theatrum philosophicum", 891–92.

42. Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, 245; *Logique du sens*, 251.

43. Foucault, "Theatrum Philosophicum", 174; "Theatrum philosophicum", 891.

44. Foucault, "Theatrum Philosophicum", 174; "Theatrum philosophicum", 892. See also Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, 211; *Logique du sens*, 215–16.

45. See Foucault, "Theatrum Philosophicum", 175–76, 192; "Theatrum philosophicum", 893, 905.

46. "The metaphysics of the phantasm revolves around atheism and transgression" (Foucault, "Theatrum Philosophicum", 171; "Theatrum philosophicum", 889).

47. Foucault, "Theatrum Philosophicum", 182; "Theatrum philosophicum", 897 (the French *bâtiment,* from *batir* ("to build") is what is translated as *construction* in English).

48. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 330; *Différénce et répétition*, 337.

Notes to Chapter 5

1. A version of my analysis in this chapter was published as "A Deleuzian Analysis of Thomas J. J. Altizer's Style", *Literature and Theology* 23, no. 2 (June 2009), 201–19.

2. See, for instance, Mark C. Taylor and Edward S. Casey below.

3. Lissa McCullough, "Historical Introduction", in *Thinking through the Death of God: A Critical Companion to Thomas J. J. Altizer*, ed. Lissa McCullough and Brian Schroeder (State University of New York Press, 2004), xv.

4. Mark C. Taylor, "Betraying Altizer", in *Thinking through the Death of God,* ed. McCullough and Schroeder, 27. Or, as articulated by Lissa McCullough: "Only Altizer among them was intent to focus on God and nothing but God" (McCullough, "Historical Introduction", xv).

5. Richard L. Rubenstein, *After Auschwitz: Radical Theology and Contemporary Judaism* (Bobbs-Merrill, 1966).

6. McCullough, "Historical Introduction", xv.

7. For example, "the radical Christian must finally recognize that the Christ of traditional faith is merely a disguise of the almighty and wholly other Creator, and therefore he must defy the orthodox Christ as the ultimate author of repression and the Lord of a fallen humanity". Altizer, *The New Apocalypse: The Radical Christian Vision of William Blake* (Davies Group, 2000), 122.

8. Altizer, *The Gospel of Christian Atheism* (Westminster, 1966), 44.

9. The early commentators on his work (in articles and debates) were in general critical yet uninitiated. Two stand out for taking him seriously and regarding his work as important and even vital systematic theology: John B. Cobb Jr., *The Theology of Altizer: Critique and Response* (1970), and Mircea Eliade, entry of April 4, 1967, *Journal II: 1957–1969* (University of Chicago Press, 1989), 297–98.

10. In film director Roman Polanski's horror movie of 1968, *Rosemary's Baby*, an issue of *Time* magazine is visible on the table. The front cover of this Easter issue, 8 April 1966, is all black with oversized red letters: "Is God dead?" The cover story discussed the problems that faced theology in the 1960s, and came about as a direct effect of Altizer's theological appearance. With around 3,500 letters to the editor (long before a comment was just one click away by internet), it generated the largest number of responses to any one story in the history of the news magazine (Curtis Prendergast, with Geoffrey Colvin, *Time, Inc.: The Intimate History of a Publishing Enterprise 1960–1980,* vol. 3, ed. Robert Lubar [Antheneum, 1986], 112).

11. Mark C. Taylor, "Betraying Altizer", 26–27.

12. ????

13. John D. Caputo and Gianni Vattimo, *After the Death of God,* ed. Jeffrey W. Robbins (Columbia University Press, 2007), 68.

14. Caputo's critique is discussed by Jeffrey W. Robbins and Christopher D. Rodkey in "Radical Theology and the New Atheism", in *Religion and the New Atheism,* ed. Amarasingam, and by Rodkey in his doctoral dissertation,

"In the Horizon of the Infinite: Paul Tillich and the Dialectic of the Sacred" (PhD diss., Drew University, 2008), in which he interestingly detects a profound impact of Paul Tillich on the entire death of God movement. In Caputo's view, the accusation of anti-Judaism goes for Taylor as well. Both his and Altizer's theologies are, Caputo says, "theologies of history that tell the big story of how we go from the religion of the Father in Judaism, to the religion of the Son in the New Testament, to the religion of the Spirit in modernity (Altizer) or in postmodernity (Taylor), which is the Final Story" (Caputo, *After the Death of God*, 69).

15. Larry D. Bouchard, review of *Thinking through the Death of God*, ed. McCullough and Schroeder, *Literature and Theology* 20, no. 2 (June 2006), 212–14.

16. Crockett, "Signs of God in a Postmodern Age", in *Secular Theology,* ed. Crockett, 206–207.

17. McCullough, "Historical Introduction", xxiii.

18. McCullough, "Historical Introduction", xxiii–xxiv.

19. Altizer, *The Self-Embodiment of God*, 91.

20. Altizer is deeply influenced by Hegel, who is dismissed by Deleuze and Foucault and thus not likely to be compatible with their post-representational ideas. This is not the place to go into a deeper discussion of the Hegelian influence and its implications, either in Altizer or in Deleuze and Foucault (Howard Munro examines Altizer's use of Hegel in "A Re-evaluation of the 'Death of God' Theology" [PhD diss., Griffith University, 2000]). Still, without going deeper into Foucault and Deleuze's relationship to Hegel, one can merely note that it was not a simple rejection of his thought in its entirety. Foucault, for instance, wrote his master's thesis (DEA) at the Sorbonne on Hegel. Unfortunately this thesis has disappeared and nothing is known of its content. Foucault's teacher Jean Hyppolite had translated Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit,* the first part in 1939 and the second in 1941, and inspired his students by what Foucault describes as a voice through which the students heard "perhaps even the voice of philosophy itself" (Macey, *The Lives of Michel Foucault*, 32). Bernauer suggests that Hyppolite's Hegel lessons were crucial in an indirect sense, however, for Foucault's entire philosophical endevour and its break with the efforts of totalization he found in Hegel. Hyppolite always presented Hegel through his philosophical successors, all presenting Hegel differently, so that Hegel underwent a fascination transformation. Not only Hegel, but philosophy and the history of ideas, suddenly stood forth as a stage. The play was always "Hegel", but each performance acted him differently; it was, in short, a theatrum philosophicum. Perhaps, then, a negative repetition of Hegel, and a creation of philosophy as theatre (Bernauer, *Michel Foucault's Force of Flight*, 97–98).

21. Altizer, *Living the Death of God: A Theological Memoir* (State University of New York Press, 2006), 30.

22. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 8; *Différénce et répétition*, 15.

23. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 80; *Différénce et répétition*, 92.

24. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 91, xviii, 294; *Différénce et répétition*, 97, 2, 303).

25. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, xvii; *Différénce et répétition*, 1.

26. Altizer, *The New Apocalypse: The Radical Christian Vision of William Blake* (Davies Group, 2000), 131. More on Altizer's notion of repetition below.

27. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 20; *Différence et répétition*, 28.

28. Gilles, "Immanence: A Life", 30; "L'immanence: Une vie", 6.

29. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 8; *Différence et répétition*, 15.

30. See, for example, Deleuze, *Bergsonism* [1966], trans. Hugh Tomlison and Barbara Habberjam (Zone, 2006), 42–43, 100–101; French edition, *Le Bergsonisme* (Presses universitaires de France, 1968), 36, 104f.

31. Many have expressed legitimate scepticism regarding Altizer's endeavour; for example, Jayne Svenungson, "Guds återkomst: En studie av gudsbegreppet inom postmodern filosofi" (PhD diss., Systematic Theology, Lunds Universitet, 2002), 39; and Mark C. Taylor, "Altizer's Originality", *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 52, no. 3 (September 1984), 569–84. Twenty years later Taylor presents a developed, yet strikingly similar critique in his essay "Betraying Altizer", in *Thinking through the Death of God,* ed. McCullough and Schroeder. Edward S. Casey's essay in the same volume, "Abyssal Absences", ironically asks, "How dare one talk in these outlandish, not to say outmoded, metaphysical ways these days?"; subsequently, however, he appreciates the deconstructive potential of Altizer's prose while finally critiquing him for not carrying his insights far enough (Casey, "Abyssal Absences", 125).

32. Casey finally claims that Altizer misses out on his own "promising but unfulfilled move toward place", since he moves towards the metaphysical rather than towards the materiality of the body (Casey, "Abyssal Absences", 140).

33. Altizer, *The Self-Embodiment of God*, 34.

34. Altizer, *The Self-Embodiment of God*, 31.

35. This notion goes along with Altizer's *coincidentia oppositorum* which he explicates in, for example, *Mircea Eliade and the Dialectic of the Sacred*. It is basically a dialectical notion of the meeting of opposites, but a dialectical encounter that finally dissolves dialectics. In the meeting of the opposites, the distinctions between the opposites remain while, at the very same time, the opposites become interchangeable: Yes/No, God/Satan, and

so on. In accordance with this dialectics beyond dialectics, identity is no longer simple or solid but to some extent always self-destructive.

36. Altizer, *The Self-Embodiment of God*, 34.

37. Ibid.

38. Casey, "Abyssal Absences", 132–33.

39. Ibid.

40. Altizer, *The Self-Embodiment of God*, 32.

41. See also Casey on the dual difference, "Abyssal Absences", 133.

42. Altizer, *The Self-Embodiment of God*, 34.

43. Here Altizer's account of Kierkegaardian repetition differs from that of Deleuze in a manner that actually draws Altizer's repetition closer to Deleuze's; see Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition* 119; *Différénce et répétition*, 126–27.

44. Altizer, "Ritual and Contemporary Repetition", *Dialog* 19 (1980): 274–80, passage on 279.

45. Altizer, "Ritual and Contemporary Repetition", 280. The references to, and elevation of, modern European literature in this article illustrates well what Taylor reacts against in 2004 on Altizer's neglect of postmodern American art.

46. Rainer Maria Rilke, *Duino Elegies*, "The Ninth Elegy" transl. C. F. MacIntyre; Altizer, "Ritual and Contemporary Repetition", 280.

47. Altizer, "Ritual and Contemporary Repetition", 280.

48. Ibid.

49.Altizer, *The Self-Embodiment of God*, 6.

50.Charles E. Winquist, "The Subversion and Transcendence of the Subject", *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 48, no. 1 (March 1980), 45–60.

51. Altizer, *The Self-Embodiment of God*, 63.

52. Taylor responds twice, in 1984 and 2004, to *The Self-Embodiment of God* and to Altizer's subsequent *Total Presence: The Language of Jesus and the Language of Today*. According to Taylor in 1984, Altizer unintentionally "subverts his own undertaking and betrays the impossibility of theology itself". And this, Taylor predicts, "might prove to be the most lasting 'theological' contribution of Altizer's writing". That is, in Taylor's view, Altizer renders his own undertaking impossible, and when doing so, Altizer brings the entire idea of theology down with him. Taylor depicts how, in Altizer's writing, "in the act of affirming itself, identity negates itself and becomes its own opposite, difference". In other words, Taylor shows, similar to what is suggested by the present analysis, the manner in which Altizer's writing manages to reveal *identity as difference*, as otherness (Taylor, "Altizer's Originality", 570).

53 Taylor, "Altizer's Originality", 569. Taylor's later critique ("Betraying Altizer", 2004) is underscored by the fact that Altizer's modernism results in a complete neglect of popular culture and postmodern art. The reason for referring mainly to Taylor's earlier critique here is its explicit Derridian take, which elucidates the benefit of a Deleuzian reading.

54. For Altizer on Derrida, see *Deconstruction and Theology* (Crossroad, 1982).

55. Casey, "Abyssal Absences", 140.

56. Altizer, *Living the Death of God*, 33.

57. Deleuze, "Immanence: A Life", 28; "L'immanence: Une vie", 5. The essay is the last piece Deleuze wrote and is said to express his life-long endeavour. The essay also depicts the ethical yet nonmoral aspect of his immanent philosophy, according to John Rajchman, introduction to *Pure Immanence: Essays on a Life* (Zone, 2005), 20.

58. Deleuze, "Immanence: A Life", 28–29 ("L'immanence: Une vie", 5).

59. Altizer, *Living the Death of God: A Theological Memoir* (Suny Press, 2006), 33.

60. This relates closely to the notion of getting rid of the God of judgement, which Deleuze finds in the playwright Antonin Artaud, and which is discussed in Catherine Dale, "Knowing One's Enemy".

61. Slavoj Žižek, *Organs without Bodies: On Deleuze and Consequences* (Routledge, 2004), 13. This statement by Žižek is multiply ironic. In accordance with Deleuze's notion of repetition, in order to betray an author one should keep repeating him/her until all that remains of the author's statement is the striking insight that each repetition discloses a different meaning and thus the impossibility of repetition in a formal sense. To Deleuze, therefore, the only relevant task for philosophy is that of creating concepts. To read a philosopher is to Deleuze never to repeat what he/she has said but to create concepts in and out of the reading process. Deleuze's readings of philosophers or literary classics are therefore known for being a fascinating synthesis of Deleuzian thought and the content of the work analysed. When Žižek says he agrees with Deleuze regarding the account of repetition as betrayal, he draws on the fact that his own book on Deleuze (*Organs without bodies*, the inverted Deleuzian "Bodies without Organs") repeats Deleuze in a manner that betrays Deleuze's notion of repetition. That is, he does not repeat Deleuze in the sense that Deleuze himself renders impossible—to that extent he honestly agrees with Deleuze—but he repeats him by affirmatively creating a Žižek-Deleuze (or, perhaps, a Žižek-Lacan-Deleuze) out of Deleuze. The point he is making when doing so is that even the kind of repetition Deleuze believes in can never solely be a creative immanent act, since such a repetition nevertheless is a betrayal

and as such an incitement for continued dialectics—which, one could say, the reception of Žižek's book among Deleuze scholars proves. Thus Žižek states, "immanence generates the specter of transcendence because it is already inconsistent in itself" (61).

62. Altizer, *Self-Embodiment of God*, 32.

63. Altizer, *Self-Embodiment of God*, 33.

64. David Jasper, "In the Wasteland: Apocalypse, Theology, and the Poets", in *Thinking Through the Death of God*, ed. McCullough and Schroeder, 185.

65. Altizer seemingly does not attempt to find words to explain the force beyond dialectics, but to take part in this very movement, in the imageless act itself—"a movement of nothingness", to employ the words of Daniel M. Price: "A nothingness that sustains its nothingness, instead of too quickly transforming itself into position" (Price, *Touching Difficulty: Sacred Form from Plato to Derrida* [Davies Group, 2009], 282).

66. As Price notes regarding Altizer's destruction of transcendence through the apocalypse of transcendence, "to go through the apocalyptic destruction into a new community of believers would miss the point; only staying within the difficulty can sustain the apocalypse as the absence, the darkness of a God who creates by destroying" (Price, *Touching Difficulty*, 246).

Notes to chapter 6

1. I will discuss only James Bernauer's description of Foucault as a negative theologian. The claims and debates on Foucault's relation to the via negativa are extensive; perhaps the most elaborate contribution is given by Arthur Bradley in his *Negative Theology* and in the article "Thinking the Outside: Foucault, Derrida and Negative Theology," *Textual Practice* 16, no. 1 (2002), 57–74.

2. A version of the first part of this chapter is published as "Magritte, Foucault and Negative Theology after Representation," in *Studia Theologica: Nordic Journal of Theology* VOL, no. ISSUE (fall 2012), 1–17.

3. Michael Mahon, "Catholic Sex," in *Foucault and Theology,* ed. Carrette and Bernauer, 261. Mahon quotes Bernauer, "The Prisons of Man: Foucault's Negative Theology," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 27, no. 4 (December 1987), 365–80.

4. Mahon, "Catholic Sex," 261.

5. SOURCE OF BERNAUER QUOTE, PAGE.

6. Arthur Bradley argues that while Foucault himself many times explicitly distances himself from negative theology (especially in and

around *The Archeaology of Knowledge,* 47), his thinking does share an (unacknowledged) structure with negative theology. For instance, when Foucault argues against Derrida that his history on madness oscillates between the historical and the ahistorical (for example, since it places this very history—which itself contains the emergence of "history"—within the historical), Foucault manages to elevate the very *historicity* into the kind of transcendental which he accuses negative theology to support. In other words, in Bradley's view, Foucault himself manages to sneak a transcendental back in: "Foucault's most rigorous critique of the transcendental implications of archaeology is still carried out in the name of a totally transcendental concept" (Bradley, "Thinking the Outside," 69). Or, as archbishop Rowan Williams once said on a related subject, it takes the risk of "slipping an 'objective' God in through the back door of the *via negativa* (Rowan Williams, *Wrestling with Angels: Conversations in Modern Theology,* ed. Mike Higton [SCM Press, 2007], 26).

7. Bradley, "Thinking the Outside," 58.

8. Foucault, "Maurice Blanchot," 53; "La pensee du dehors," 543.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

11. Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason,* trans. Richard Howard (Tavistock, 1965); French edition, *Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique: Folie et déraison* (Plon, 1961).

12. According to Macey, *The Lives of Michel Foucault,* 505n105.

13. Foucault, *This Is Not a Pipe,* trans. James Harkness (University of California Press, 2008), 26; French edition, *Ceci n'est pas un pipe* (Fata Morgana, 1973), 21.

14. Foucault, *This Is Not a Pipe,* 27; *Ceci n'est pas un pipe,* 22.

15. Foucault, *This Is Not a Pipe,* 25; *Ceci n'est pas un pipe,* 19–20.

16. Or, to speak again with Deleuze, and to modulate this thought slightly: concepts are not signifying, they do not need to compensate their own lack of concretion by relating to 'the lived' (Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* 30ff.; *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?,* 36ff.).

17. Foucault, *This Is Not a Pipe,* 27; *Ceci n'est pas un pipe,* 22.

18. Foucault, *This Is Not a Pipe,* 28; *Ceci n'est pas un pipe,* 23.

19. Foucault, *This Is Not a Pipe,* 30–31; *Ceci n'est pas un pipe,* 26–27.

20. Translator James Harkness underlines the French wordplay of *lieu commun,* which luckily works just as well in English (Foucault, *This Is Not a Pipe,* 61).

21. Foucault, "The Prose of Actaeon," 83; "La prose d'Actéon," 457.

22. Foucault, *This Is Not a Pipe,* 32; *Ceci n'est pas un pipe,* 27.

23. Foucault, *This Is Not a Pipe,* 34; *Ceci n'est pas un pipe,* 29.

24. Foucault, *This Is Not a Pipe,* 34f.; *Ceci n'est pas un pipe,* 30.

25. Réne Magritte, *Magritte: The True Art of Painting,* trans. Richard Miller, compiled by Harry Torczyner, with the collaboration of Bella Bessard (Abradale, 1985), 66. René Magritte, exhibition of paintings, Sidney Janis Gallery, 6 West 57th Street, New York City, 1–31 December 1977.

26. Foucault discusses the notion of analogy, for example, in *This Is Not a Pipe,* 50. In this analysis, I have chosen to focus on the affirmative versus the negative and their theological counterparts.

27. Foucault, "Maurice Blanchot," 38; "La pensee du dehors," 536.

28. Foucault, *This Is Not a Pipe,* 43; *Ceci n'est pas un pipe,* 41.

29. In my view, this would indicate, contrary to Bradley's claim, that the negotiation of the transcendental is not unrecognized in Foucault, quite the contrary; see Bradley, "Thinking the Outside," 71.

Notes to chapter 7

1. She published 43 titles, on spiritual subjects, quaker thought, on society and school issues, education and teaching etc. Her autobiographical series consists of *Arnold* (1944), *Bareheaded* (1950), and *Ready to Travel* (1954), and is written in the third person. (Fogelklou names her main character Mi.) *Arnold* is in part the biography of her beloved husband, the Dante scholar Arnold Norlind. *Bareheaded* describes Fogelklou's life before her marriage.

2. "Emilia Fogelklou is probably one of the most overlooked thinkers of twentieth-century Sweden, perhaps because she fits into no obvious category." Swanson, Alan, quoted on the cover of Lutz, *Reality and Radiance.*

3. See also Meijling Bäckman, Ingrid, *Den resfärdiga. Studier i Emilia Fogelklous självbiografi,* ac diss, Lund, 1997.

4. Meijling Bäckman, Ingrid, *Den resfärdiga. Studier i Emilia Fogelklous självbiografi,* ac diss, Lund, 1997.

5. "fragment av en åskådning, jämte speglingar av samtida sökarrörelser i den utsträckning de nått mig," in the foreword to *Form och strålning,* Bonniers, 1958.

6. Trans by Howard T Lutz in *Reality and Radiance,* p 61. (used in her dödsannons)

7. "Själva strålningsarten är dess [skapandets] 'form'—vibrationer in genom en oändlig mångfald av personliga världar och gestaltningsringar i alla grader av räckvidd och skapande förvandlingar." Björk, "Varför ger Emilia Fogelklou en andnöd?" ("Why does Emilia Fogelklou make it difficult to breathe?"), *Dagens Nyheter,* 3 November 2009 (my translation).

8. Ibid.

9. Catharina Stenqvist and Anders Jeffner have reflected insightfully on the way in which Fogelklou tried to reach beyond the division between subjective truths and objective truths, a division that was widely presupposed in philosophy of religion at the time. See Stenqvist, "Emilia Fogelklous verklighet," and Jeffner, "Sjuk av jungfrufödelsen: Teologi och filosofi hos Emilia Fogelklou," both in *Emilia Fogelklou läst idag: Nio essäer,* ed. Anders Jeffner (Kungliga Vittherhetsakademien, 2010).

10. Thank you, Julia Rydberg of the Swedish Quaker society, the group of Friends in Sweden, for a wonderful and instructive conversation on Quaker faith in general and on the notion of inner light in particular.

11. Gunnel Vallquist, "Genomlyst: Emilia Fogelklou i minnet," *Gnosis: Tidskrift för en andlig kultur* 2, no. 4: *Emilia Fogelklous Verklighetsupptäckt* (1989), 205, part of which is translated by Howard T. Lutz in *Reality and Radiance: Selected Autobiographical Works of Emilia Fogelklou* (Friends United Press, 1985), 61.

12. See "Det utåtvända och det inåtvända barnet," in Fogelklou, *Den allra vanligaste människan: Stadier och vägar* (Bonniers, 1931), and Eriksson, *Liv i* överflöd*: Prolegomena till Emilia Fogelklou* (Åsak, 1988), 11.

13. Fogelklou refers to Wilhelm Schöne's *Das Licht in der Malerei.* Fogelklou, Emilia, "Synsättens förvandlingar" in *Form och strålning* (Bonniers, 1958), 37.

14. Note how, according to Fogelklou's reasoning, both God and the subject become transcendent in the Renaissance.

15. Fogelklou, "Synsättens förvandlingar," 39.

16. There are interesting points of correspondence between Fogelklou and contemporary post-representational materialist feminists like Karen Barad. Barad, influenced by Niels Bohr, Michel Foucault and Judith Butler, among others, underlines that "matter is not a fixed essence; rather, matter is substance in its intra-active becoming—not a thing but a doing, a congealing of agency" (Barad, "Posthumanist Performativity," 826).

17. Fogelklou, "Synsättens förvandlingar," 40ff.

18. She refers to Karl Jaspers' *Die geistige Situation der Zeit;* Fogelklou, Emilia, "Mänskliga tidsdokument," in *Form och Strålning,* 37. Stenqvist rightly underlines the importance of democracy and equality in Fogelklou's thinking. The fact that Fogelklou found her spiritual home in the quaker movement was, to a large extent, because of their pacifist and non-hierarcic organization without priests or formal leaders (Stenqvist, "Emilia Fogelklous verklighet," 22).

19. Fogelklou, "Mänskliga tidsdokument," 99.

20. Fogelklou, Emilia, "Om Georges Bataille: Mystiker och kritiker," in *Minnesbilder och* ärenden (Bonniers, 1963), 113–30. In his essay on Klossowski, Foucault describes how his reading of Bataille and Blanchot come together in his reading of Klossowski. The article is written in 1964, thus one year after Fogelklou and Foucault writes their articles on Bataille. In this later article Foucault describes how he in Bataille encounters a transubstantiation on its head. He finds a movement where the consecrated body once again becomes suffering flesh, where the sacred presence becomes a vomiting body. Foucault writes: "For Bataille writing is a consecration undone: a transubstantiation ritualised in reverse where real presence becomes again a recumbent body and finds itself led back to silence in an act of vomiting" (Foucault, "Prose of Actaeon," 83; "Prose d'Actéon," 457). I believe that the kind of reversal that Foucault sees in Bataille recalls Fogelklou's emphasis on matter. It recalls her experience of reality—what she calls the *discovery of reality*—which in a sense is a reversal of the very idea of a transcendent and immaterial divinity. Furthermore, it is a reversal that she in my view performs continuously in her writing through her coupling of radiance and form: by nailing radiance to form.

21. Selections of this letter are published as "Varför Emilia inte ville bli präst: Ur ett brev till Lydia Wahlström den 17 nov 1916," in *Gnosis: Tidskrift för en andlig kultur* 2, no. 4: *Emilia Fogelklous Verklighetsupptäckt* (1989), 124. Fogelklou, "Mänskliga tidsdokument," 98.

22. She famously describes this experience indirectly through the main character, Mi, of her novel *Barhuvad* (*Bareheaded*) from 1951.

23. Fogelklou constantly brought new, provocative ideas and thinkers into her own writing. At the age of eighty-four, when Fogelklou was invited to speak to a literary society in Härnösand, a small northern Swedish town, she chose to speak on Bataille, immensely provocative at the time. Fogelklou had read all his work and was inspired: "It isn't just Stockholm that needs new ideas," she said (Malin Bergman Andrews, *Whirlwind of Life: The Story of Emilia Fogelklou* [Quaker Books, 2004], 180).

24. (My translation). "Själva distinktionen är vertikal. Den är strimman, stålningen, . . . det gränsgenomträngande som gör hela olikheten. En utifrån kanske skarpt markerad skillnad i formvärde, stil eller kulturart kan genombrytas av en helt och hållet *inre* factor 'som rönes lättare än förklaras.'").

25. Birgitta Trotzig, "Låt kärleken vandra fritt" in *Gnosis: Tidskrift för en andlig kultur* 2, no. 4: *Emilia Fogelklous Verklighetsupptäckt* (1989), 126.

26. In Klossowski, Foucault finds language as "the transgressive word," language as simulacra (Foucault, "Prose of Actaeon," 82; "Prose d'Actéon," 457).

27. Foucault, "Maurice Blanchot: The Thought from Outside," p 11.

Notes to chapter 8

1. Foucault, "Prose of Actaeon," 83; "Prose d'Actéon," 457. Scott Durham argues that Magritte's pipe paintings attempt to paint the simulacra. Scott also argues, however, that what he regards as the *utopian* aspect of the simulacrum needs the narrative in order to stand forth as such. Only within (and pointing beyond) the narrative is the simulacrum an actual becoming, an actual event rather than merely break with the logic of resemblance. Thus, in Durham's view, "Klossowski's simulacra offer us something Magritte's cannot" (Scott Durham, "From Magritte to Klossowski: The Simulacrum, between Painting and Narrative," *October* 64 [spring 1993], 16–33, quote on 33).

2. "Teologin är post-*kristen* och I kontakt med sin gamla *credo*logik och *credo*praktik. Men den är likafullt *post*-kristen och utlämnad åt den *cogito*logik och *cogito*praktik som blockerar credots återkomst" (Martinson, *Postkristen teologi,* 202). As the translations are mine, I offer the Swedish original.

3. Foucault, *Order of Things,* 80; *Les mots et les choses,* 94.

4. "*Erkänna* och *använda* den kristna teologiska traditionen också i dess upplösningsskede" (Martinson, *Postkristen teologi,* 202).

5. "Som en gemensam kulturell självtolkning, blir teologin bruten och diskontinuerlig" (Martinson, *Postkristen teologi,* 202).

6. Martinson, *Perseverence without Doctrine: Adorno, Self-Critique, and the Ends of Academic Theology* (Peter Lang, 2000), 330.

7. Ward, *Barth, Derrida,* xviii; Caputo, "Atheism, A/theology," 274.

8. "There is no negative ontological argument against God implied in différance nor is différance to be confused with God" (Caputo, "Atheism, A/theology," 274).

9. McCormack, *Orthodox and Modern,* 157.

10. Raschke, "À-*Dieu* to Jacques Derrida," 45.

11. Martinson, *Postkristen teologi,* 113.

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